**Slide 1: Part 1: Using ABE Community Planning Strategies for Adult Career Pathways**

Hello and welcome to the three-part, pre-recorded webinar entitled *Using Adult Basic Education Community Planning Strategies for Adult Career Pathways*.

My name is Patricia Pelletier and I am the community planning consultant with Adult and Community Learning Services, ACLS, of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I am also the designer of the Indicators of Effective Community Planning for Adult Basic Education Coalitions in Massachusetts.

The three-part pre-recorded webinar is intended for adult basic education programs to develop strategies and activities that will use the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning, developed in 2013, as a framework to support Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, implementation and to develop and enhance adult career pathways partnership building.

Charles Darwin understood the importance of partnering and collaborating. He said: “In the long history of humankind...those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.”

So let’s begin Part 1 of the webinar.

**Slide 2: Overview**

Part 1 will provide ideas on how the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Adult Career Pathways and ABE Community Planning connect and ideas on how to structure ABE community planning to address the partnership focus of our work in ABE.

In Part 2, which you can access at any time, you will hear from some Massachusetts ABE programs that have successful partnerships that were created for a variety of reasons, including next steps, access, and adult career pathways.

Part three of this series will share some national promising practices in adult career pathways partnerships and programming.

**Slide 3: Career Pathways: WIOA Definition**

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA, includes some changes that will affect how we do adult basic education, many of which will require partnerships and collaborations with different entities.

WIOA defines the term “career pathway” as a combination of rigorous and high quality education, training, and other services that align with skills industries in the area. The WIOA definition says that career pathways prepares individuals to be successful in education, provides counseling and support for individuals to succeed, is contextualized to the industry’s occupations, organizes its curriculum to meet those needs, enables individuals to attain a secondary diploma or equivalent and at least one recognized postsecondary credential, and helps the individual enter or advance in an occupational or career cluster.

To accomplish these goals, ABE programs will need strong partnerships. Partners may include the One Stop Career Centers, libraries, health care providers, job training programs, community colleges, and others to help students meet their next steps and career goals.

**Slide 4: ACLS Adult Career Pathways**

The Adult and Community Learning Services’ Adult Career Pathways program is one of the

many that represents ACLS’s commitment to increasing the number of ABE students with the skills, degrees, and industry-recognized credentials needed for employment in high-demand occupations.

It is aligned with WIOA and underscores ACLS’s ongoing priority to strengthen connections and collaborations among the ABE, higher education, and workforce systems in order to maintain and enhance a comprehensive education and training system for the state. Also, Adult Career Pathways program activities could include integrated education and training, workforce preparation, and integrated English literacy and civics activities that are aligned with the regional workforce priorities.

As the focus of ABE began to change to “next steps,” a pilot project was funded by ACLS called the Policy to Performance, or P2P. The Policy to Performance initiative was funded through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, from 2011 to 2013.

The ACLS Policy to Performance Task Force convened a statewide summit in June 2011 with support from the Boston Foundation and the Executive Office of the Community Colleges. Representatives from adult education programs, community colleges, One Stop Career Centers, and Workforce Investment Boards from each of the 16 local workforce board regions met to discuss how each entity could contribute to the low-skilled adults’ college and career readiness and the types of career pathways that were currently available. So the regional groups determined the ways in which they could improve career pathways for learners within their regions and designed an action plan for enhancing services.

The recommendation from the summit was to align curriculum to facilitate the work of adult education program instructors and community college faculty in providing services and learning opportunities to assist adults to make a successful transition to postsecondary education. Eight P2P pilot programs were funded to provide contextualized instruction, career and college readiness, and advising and support services, drawing from the previous Adult Basic Education Transition to College initiative and from other ACLS activities that examined career and college awareness instruction and processes for advising and counseling.

So as a result of the work of the P2P initiative and various other ACLS task forces and next steps initiatives, a policy was issued that all Community Adult Learning Centers develop an Individualized Education and Career Plan with each learner. Additionally, Adult Learning Centers and Career Pathways programs required grantees to establish partnerships to facilitate transition and support services as an initial step in building a foundation for ABE transition services. These initiatives provided valuable information and guidance to the development of the Adult Career Pathways program in Massachusetts.

The ultimate goal of the Adult Career Pathways program is to place students on a career pathway leading to family self-sustaining employment.

**Slide 5: Key Elements**

In a joint letter in April of 2012, the U.S. Departments of Health, Education and Human Services, and Labor committed to promote the use of career pathways approaches as a promising strategy to help adults acquire marketable skills and industry-recognized credentials through better alignment of education, training and employment, and human and social services among public agencies and with employers.

The letter also states that “While there are a number of definitions of career pathways, this term generally refers to a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of further education and employment in that area.”

This definition closely aligns with the WIOA and ACLS definitions as well. One thing common to all definitions is that partnerships are necessaryto effectively carry out a career pathways initiative.

**Slide 6: Key Partners**

The three key partners in a region – the workforce partner, Adult Career Pathways program or programs, and the One Stop Career Centers – share both the customer and the responsibility for providing services to that customer, including moving the customer through the system to an identified outcome. The design, implementation, and success, in the form of customer outcomes, of an Adult Career Pathways program, therefore, is the shared responsibility of three regional partners.

Each partner plays an important role in the Adult Career Pathways program. A fuller description of the roles of each partner is available in the new Massachusetts Guidelines for Effective Adult Career Pathways Programs that are available on the ACLS website.

As you can see, partnerships play a large role in the adult career pathways. A critically important contribution of the workforce partner, which in most cases will be the regional workforce boards, is to build strong collaborations with additional workforce development partners, local community colleges, and representatives of the business community, and/or labor organizations and others that can help the workforce partner and its Adult Career Pathways programs achieve regional goals. Different types of partners contribute to the Adult Career Pathways program in different ways.

For example, workforce development partners may supply information about the regional employers’ workforce needs, technical skills, and standards to aid curriculum development. Employers also might partner with ABE programs to develop basic skills training for their current employees or serve as mentors to pathways participants.

Postsecondary partners may share information about entrance requirements for college certification programs and develop articulation agreements to facilitate adults’ transition to college courses. These partners might also join forces with ABE programs to provide basic skills instruction or share college facilities and classrooms.

Other important partners include community-based organizations, unions, school districts, and other ABE programs. So partnerships are critical to meet the needs of participants in Adult Career Pathways programs in Massachusetts and overall in an ABE program. A community planning approach, as outlined in the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions that were released in 2013, is a framework that can support the development and sustainability of a Career Pathways program.

Let’s look at how the ACLS research-based Indicators of Effective ABE Community Planning can support partnership development for ABE and Adult Career Pathways.

**Slide 7: ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions**

As I mentioned, in 2013, ACLS developed and provided extensive training on research-based Indicators of Effective ABE Community Planning Coalitions to help strengthen and build the capacity of Massachusetts programs to conduct community planning. As the Indicators document notes: “Community coalitions have been used for many years under different names such as collaborative partnerships, community forums, task forces, and interagency coordinating councils.”

Research refers to the term “community coalition” to mean “a mutually beneficial relationship between individuals, governmental agencies, private and public sector organizations, and community-based organizations that seek to achieve common goals.” The ABE Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions describe six distinct Indicators.

**Slide 8: Six Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions**

They are: Leadership, Membership, Structure, Operations and Processes, Vision and Mission, and Contextual Factors.

You can find a lot of information on the Indicators of Effective Community Planning at the ACLS website, including a summary of the 2014 training and lots of supplemental resources. The Indicators themselves can be found at the link noted at the bottom of this slide. For this presentation, we’re going to briefly go over the Membership, Structure, and Contextual Factors indicators as they relate to developing partnerships.

**Slide 9: ACLS Community Planning Indicator 2: Membership**

Indicator two of the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions is Membership. An effective ABE community planning coalition includes members that will support the goals of the ABE program and learners.

To support the goals of an Adult Career Pathways program, at a minimum, your community planning partnership should include:

* Educationally-focused institutions that can provide assistance and information on curriculum and services to help learners achieve next steps along a career pathway.
* Workforce development programs such as job training vendors and One Stop Career Centers because they are providing training that aligns with the identified career pathways in the workforce investment board region.

These members can provide information on the skills that learners need to move into job training programs along a career pathway continuum.

Local and regional employers and businesses can be represented on your coalition through the workforce board. Through WIOA, workforce boards are charged with identifying and articulating career pathways in critical industries in the region and the education and skills necessary to enter and engage in those career pathways.

Community colleges are important partners in an ABE community planning coalition as well as career pathways partnerships. Community colleges often have transition or bridge programs for ABE learners to prepare for entrance into regular, credit-bearing or certificate programs. Community colleges can also help develop curriculum that will help learners more smoothly transition from ABE to community college.

Social service agencies are important in your partnership to help support learners with basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, child care, transportation, safety, and health including mental health. Knowledge about and support from social services providers will allow learners to meet their basic needs so that a higher level of learning and skills development can occur in the ABE program and beyond.

While this isn’t a complete list of members in an ABE community planning coalition, these are fundamental categories that should be part of your coalition or your career pathways program, subcommittee or advisory council.

So you might be asking, “How many partnerships do I need to have? Career Pathways Partnerships? Community Planning Partnerships? Advisory Councils?” The answer is, “It depends.”

**Slide 10:** **ACLS Community Planning Indicator 3: Structure**

Indicator three of the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions is Structure. This Indicator describes processes to manage a partnership which are based on the needs and goals of your partnership or program.

A structure that works for the type of coalition or partnership you have, and the processes in place in your coalition, can determine how effective your coalition is in supporting learners and a career pathway model. ABE community planning coalitions vary in the structures they use. Research indicates that coalitions with specific and identified structures are more likely to achieve collaborative synergy in the partnership.

Some partnerships have a steering committee or “core working group” that provides guidance to coalition activities. This group, comprised of representatives of the coalition, establishes goals and benchmarks for the coalition and convenes regularly to assess the goals, activities and outcomes of the coalition. Others use ad hoc committees or working groups that work on specific projects or activities identified by the core group or steering committee. Some communities with only one ABE program join with an existing, larger partnership, and may become a formal subcommittee of that larger entity, with written agreements to focus on issues associated with ABE and adult career pathways.

In all cases, a defined structure facilitates collaboration and helps members to more fully understand the purpose of the partnership and their individual roles and responsibilities.

In an earlier slide, there was mention of the Career Pathways Working Group as an important part of an adult career pathways program model. An ABE program could restructure or expand their existing ABE community planning partnership to include a subcommittee or working group that would focus on adult career pathways and college and career readiness. Members of that subcommittee could serve as the ABE liaison to the Adult Career Pathways Regional Working Group of the Workforce Investment Board. Or, the workforce partner of the Regional Community Pathways Working Group could decide to build that working group as a subcommittee of your ABE community planning partnership.

These are just a few ways that the Adult Career Pathways partnership focus can be facilitated by the ABE community planning partnership or coalition. Part 2 of this webinar series will provide you with some examples from ABE programs on how they structure, combine, or collaborate between the different groups to maximize effectiveness and time.

**Slide 11: Sample Partnership Structure**

An organizational chart for an ABE community planning coalition might show the relationship between the different subgroups based on the goals and/or action plan for the committee’s work.

Organizational Chart

Row 1: Steering Committee

* Provides overall leadership
* Sets priorities/goals
* Monitors results

Row 2: Membership Committee, Career Pathways Committee (Working Group), and Student Leadership Committee

Row 3: Coalition Members

In this example, the coalition determined that they needed to increase membership to include more workforce development representation to address the changes in the WIOA legislation and to support their adult career pathways program. So they formed a membership committee to help recruit new members and a Career Pathways Committee to focus on specific needs of an adult career pathways program. In this structure, there is also a student leadership committee which provides input into the coalition’s work like identifying needs in a student survey and providing input and coordination of a career fair.

All of the subgroups communicate and work with the full coalition through its membership. Other than the steering committee or core group, the subcommittees or working groups can be “ad hoc” which means they serve for the special purpose or end, and are time limited. People are more apt to commit to working on a committee if they know it is time limited and focused in a specific area.

So the Career Pathways subcommittee shown here could also serve as the Career Pathways working group that I mentioned earlier which is a primary role of the workforce partner. The workforce partner could help to garner support and input from stakeholders such as local businesses, One Stop Career Centers, industry associations, workforce board members, postsecondary education, and training programs, schools, or colleges to inform program planning and continuous improvement.

This career pathways working group can be part of your ABE community planning coalition or it can be a subcommittee of the local workforce board, or other structure that works best for you. The important thing is that you have a partnership or committee with the stakeholders that support the goals of your ABE program or Adult Career Pathways program and learners. Utilizing an established ABE community planning coalition or partnership as the career pathways working group could help to avoid duplication and create synergy between various networks and funding streams that have the same goals.

**Slide 12:** **ACLS Community Planning Indicator 6: Contextual Factors**

ACLS Community Planning Indicator six is Contextual Factors. Contextual factors are the overarching conditions that frame the work of the program. Contextual factors are internal and external conditions that either exist or are lacking in the environment and which can benefit or impede the effectiveness of the partnership and the programs it represents.

The ability to continually scan the community for changes in demographics and other conditions is critical to our ability to best serve students. Contextual factors such as political considerations, changes in leadership, funding guidelines and requirements, geography, demographics, and community needs and assets are important factors in providing leadership and policy to the ABE program. Knowledge of the community’s and/or region’s internal and external environment which could affect the work of ABE programs and partnerships is important to overall effectiveness. Effective partnerships monitor changes in student composition, status of community agencies, funding climate and opportunities, among other things.

Part 2 of this presentation will feature three ABE programs which also operate Adult Career Pathways programs and will show how the changing environment, or contextual factors have resulted in the evolution of their programs and partnerships to address those changes.

**Slide 13: Factors in Successful Partnerships**

The publication *ABE Career Connections: A Manual for Integrating Adult Basic Education into Career Pathways* by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE, now called OCTAE) says that when seeking partners for ABE pathways, ABE programs should consider building on existing partnerships along with establishing new ones. With existing partnerships, partners can establish new terms and specific agreements for the pathways project work. ABE programs also may benefit from strengthening intra-organizational partnerships, such as those with other departments on campus, in your organization or community to facilitate close ties with important stakeholders and build on internal expertise. And, outreach and networking are important in promoting ABE pathways and partnership opportunities, for example, through meetings with employer associations, local Chambers of Commerce, and advisory groups that convene educational stakeholders.

The OVAE publication also identifies the factors as essential to the success of partnerships as having supportive environmental conditions like existing or past successful collaborations and good political and organizational climates; trusting, respectful and flexible relationships; a clear vision with well defined goals, an established structure to support the partnership and ongoing communications and processes in place. These are the same characteristics identified in the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions for ABE.

Part 3 of this webinar series will provide some additional tools and resources for developing partnerships to meet WIOA and career pathways goals.

**Slide 14:Contacts**

In summary, using the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions is one framework ABE programs can use to support the focus of partnership development for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and for ABE Adult Career Pathways programs. The Indicators document can be downloaded on the ACLS website.

For further information on ABE community planning, please contact Kathy Rodriguez at the email shown on this slide. For information on Adult Career Pathways, contact Derek Kalchbrenner at his email address also on this slide.

This concludes Part 1 of the three-part recorded webinar on Using ABE Community Planning Strategies for Adult Career Pathways. Thank you.