



Career Foundations for Crisis-Facing Populations

NCPN Connect 2023 Conference
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Introducing Your Presenter!



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MISSION: Since 1973, Women Employed has worked to improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity.

We seek systemic improvements that touch the lives of women in low-income jobs and women of color, particularly Black and Latinx women.

HOW WE APPROACH OUR WORK

ENSURE QUALITY JOBS: Ensure appropriate compensation. Paid leave, schedule flexibility, fair workplaces, & enforcement

FORGE PATHWAYS: Forge education and career pathways to economic security, leadership, and wealth

SHIFT ECONOMIC POWER: Shift resource distribution to empower women economically



WE's Career Pathways Work

Women Employed is a trusted expert on career pathways programs.

- In Illinois, WE connected with our partners at the Chicago Jobs Council, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the Illinois Community College Board to convene a wide group of stakeholders in career pathways.
- Developed a single definition of “career pathways” for the entire state of Illinois.
- Developed FREE bridge and Career Foundations lesson plans with City Colleges of Chicago, offered to colleges and universities nationwide.
- Improve policies and procedures that will allow these students to access financial aid by working with institutions and with the Illinois Community College Board to develop a state-defined process for Ability to Benefit.
- Fight to increase MAP funding for students in Illinois

What We'll Cover in This Presentation

- › **What** is Career Foundations and who is it for?
- › **Why** create a special version for crisis-facing populations?
- › **How** did we modify the existing curriculum to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence?
- › **What** does the participant's journey look like?
- › **How** can we make the curriculum more inclusive and welcoming for all (what other populations are we, or should we be, thinking about?)

What is Career Foundations?

Career Foundations is a short course that helps participants develop a career pathway plan that leads to good jobs, strategically using their current program (Adult Education or Workforce) as an on-ramp.

What is the Career Foundations Consortium?

- › A group of Adult Education and Workforce Development organizations, convened by Women Employed, that offer Career Foundations as part of their programming
- › Now in its 8th year
- › A collaboration to share best practices as well as test and improve Career Foundations
- › Over 3,500 Career Foundations students enrolled through the Consortium to date
- › **Will serve as an integral part of the pilot we are going to discuss today**

The Career Foundations Mission Statement

Any Chicagoan with educational barriers to employment, no matter which organization they approach for help, has the opportunity to improve their skills to be able to transition to a post-secondary credential leading to a family-sustaining job.

Career Foundations Can Be Taught Virtually or In-Person

- › Flexible: in-person, hybrid, and fully remote instruction
- › Synchronous or asynchronous learning
- › Based on Google Docs and Slides
- › Google Classroom (but doesn't have to be)
- › Has 3 components: instructor guide, lesson slides for projecting (in person or virtually), student guide with worksheets
- › Technology Integration Toolkit
- › Facilitate student interaction; not independent, self-paced learning
- › Customizable



The FULL Career Foundations curriculum consists of 24 lessons that are organized into 8 sequential themes

- › **Theme 1** | Course Goals and Strategies for Success
- › **Theme 2** | Transferable Skills: Skills You Are Already Using
- › **Theme 3** | Toward an Elevator Speech (learning to articulate skills, interests, and goals)
- › **Theme 4** | City Colleges of Chicago Career Focus Areas (Career Program)
- › **Theme 5** | Commercial for a Chosen Focus Area (Career Program)
- › **Theme 6** | Plan to Get to College or Job Training
- › **Theme 7** | Creating a Pre-College Timeline
- › **Theme 8** | Portfolio Presentations

Career Foundations is now more accessible

Both the instructor and student components of Career Foundations were modified in June 2022 to improve accessibility for users with disabilities.

- Properly nested headings

Heading 1

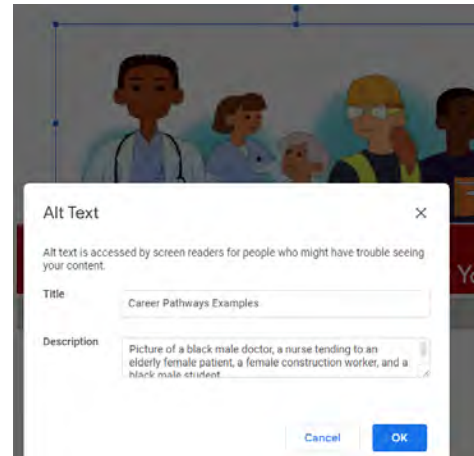
Heading 2

Heading 3

- Increased color contrast on headings, etc.

Aa

- Alt tags on images and hyperlinks



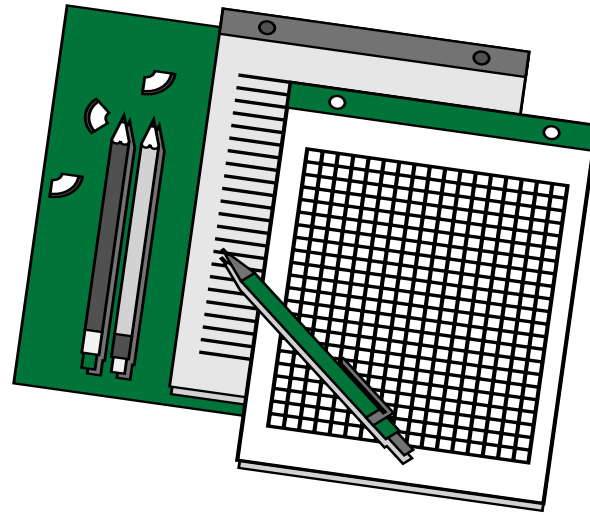
- Proper table tags (or marked "layout only")

A Spanish translation of Career Foundations now available!!!

CF Modifications for Workforce Programs

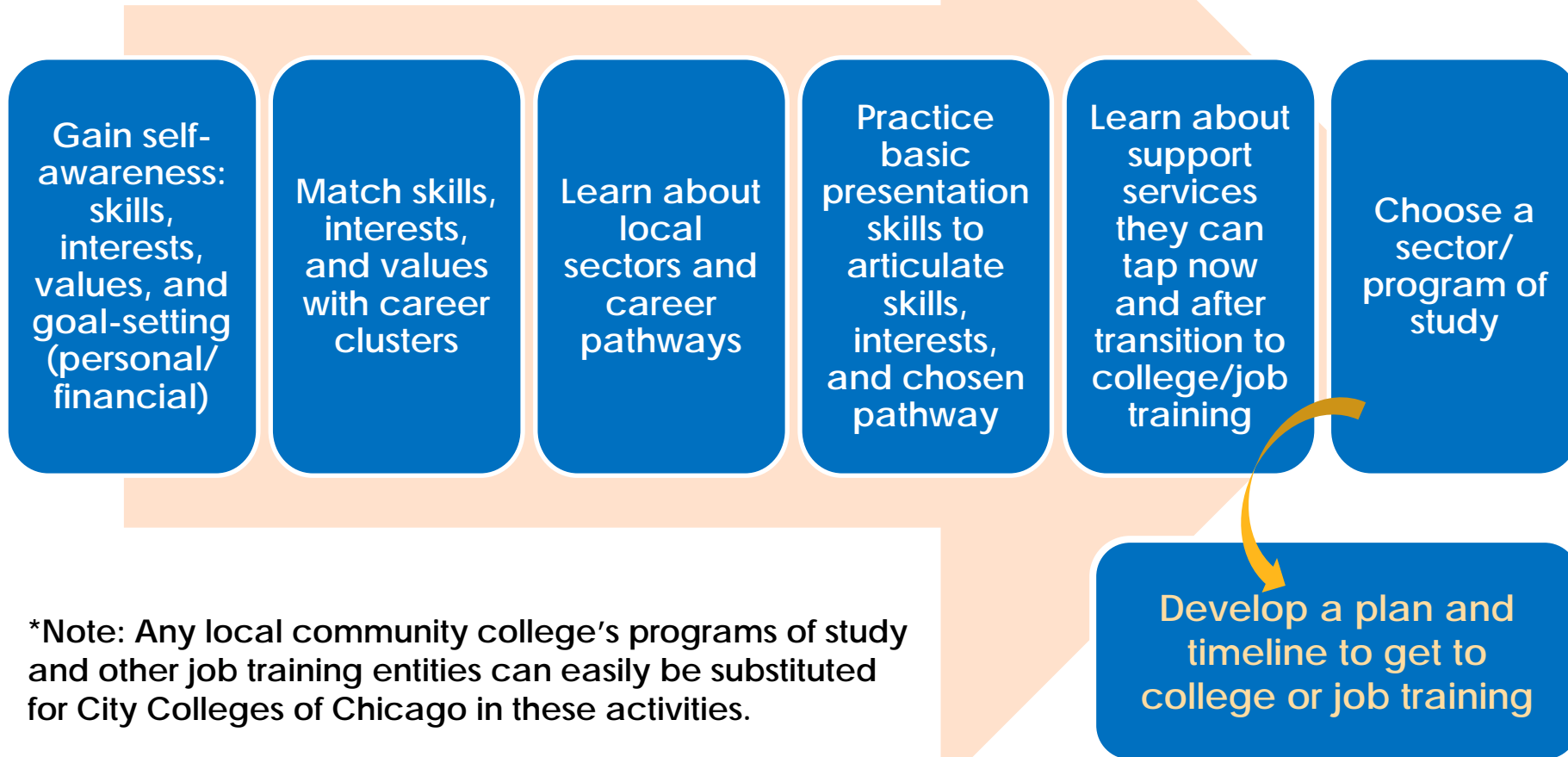


32
HOURS



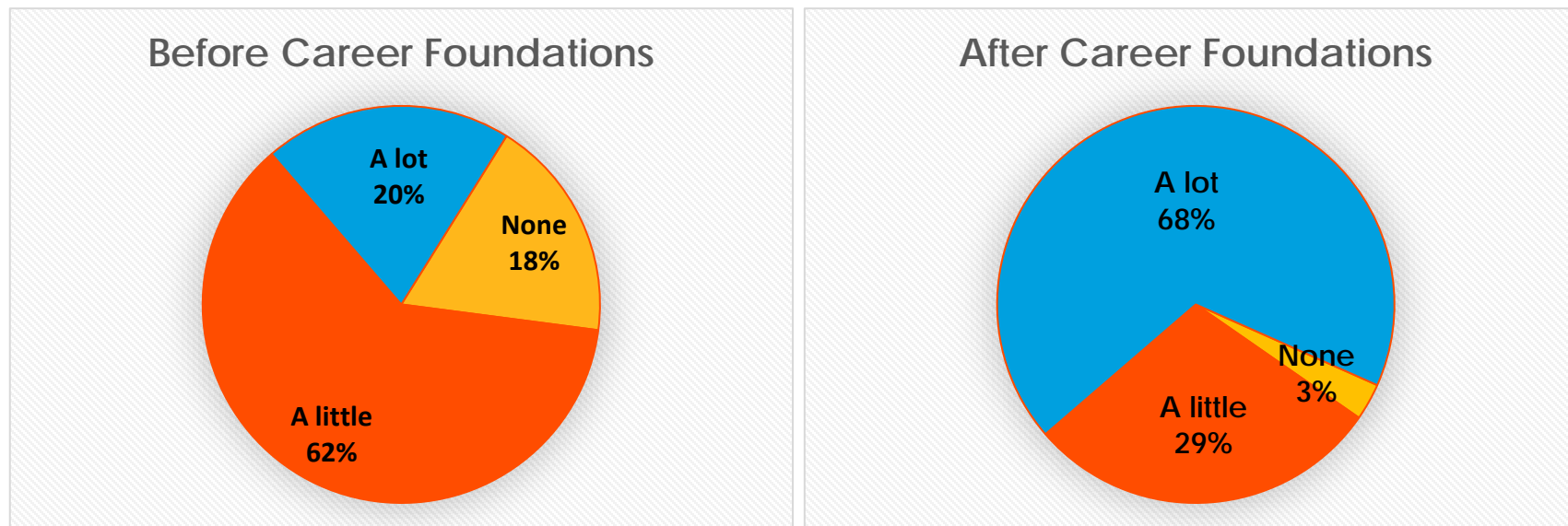
2
HOURS

Career Foundations participants move through a series of scaffolded steps



Career Foundations is Effective

The percentage of students who reported knowing “a lot” about which careers would be a good fit for them increased from 20% (before CF) to 68% (after CF).



Additionally, 95% of respondents answered “Yes” to the question “Did this course make you more confident about reaching your education and career goals?”

Source: Post-course surveys administered to Career Foundations students at CBOs, Year 2-Year 5 (4/15/20)

What do students think of Career Foundations?

"It has helped me to **understand how long some programs are and how many credits I need** to obtain a degree. It also has helped me to see what classes City Colleges offer, and what degrees transfer over to a University."

"My instructor **made me feel comfortable** enough to help me figure out a great career for myself."

"There's **so many different careers to explore** in the industry. It allows me to better myself as an individual and further my education."

"[Career Foundations] made me start thinking **I really can get my GED and obtain more learning skills** and also to start on a degree and my career."

"I feel I have much to offer and **I have more confidence now** coming to class interacting with others and [with] the encouragement I received I will continue my education."

Source: Career Foundations students' comments from post-class surveys

The Intersecting Barriers Pilot: Using Career Foundations with Survivors of Domestic Violence

Intersecting Barriers Pilot Project and Partners



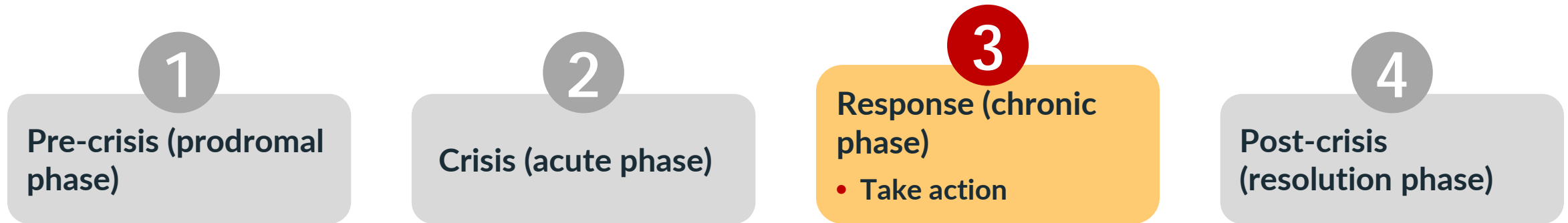
Founded in 1978, [Life Span](#) provides comprehensive services for survivors and children, enabling them to live without violence, build upon their strengths and become self-sufficient.

Life Span Chicago will serve as the pilot organization offering Career Foundations to survivors of domestic violence who are ready to move forward with preparation for economic self-sufficiency.



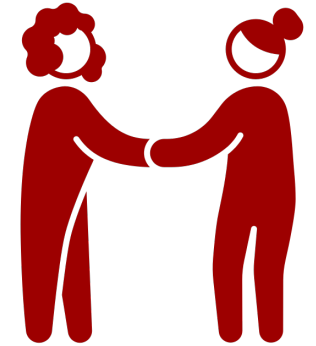
Who is the intended audience for the Intersecting Barriers version of Career Foundations?

- › Have experienced trauma
- › DV Client
- › Currently in response phase ("take action")



Graphic adapted from alertmedia.com.

Steps for setting up a Career Foundations pilot partnership between the DV Agency and the Partner Organizations*



- Divide curriculum – at safe space vs. at partner organizations
- Include college and non-college career pathway options
- Enhance financial goals lessons
- Set up transition process – including trauma-informed care training

*In the pilot phase, the DV Agency is **Life Span Chicago** and the Partner Organizations are the member organizations of the **Career Foundations Consortium**.

Icon credits: #1 and #4 created by Iconathon US from [The Noun Project](https://thenounproject.com/); #2 created by Aficons from [The Noun Project](https://thenounproject.com/); #3 created by Lakshisha from [The Noun Project](https://thenounproject.com/)

Triggering Themes

Some activities in the curriculum that could be triggering for trauma-affected populations:

- › Discussing success stories
- › Developing success strategies/ planning for difficulties
- › Goal setting
- › Setting financial goals

Students identify their dominant personality traits in several ways, to determine their RIASEC category

- R = Realistic
- I = Investigative
- A = Artistic
- S = Social
- E = Enterprising
- C = Conventional

(Partial excerpt from Student Guide Lesson 5 at right):

...work with numbers or charts						
...keep records of my work						
...be a leader						
...work outdoors						
...work in an office						
...help people						
...draw						
...give speeches						
Add the total number x's in each column and write the totals for each column in the bottom row.	R	I	A	S	E	C

Goal Setting Activities from Lesson 3

Activity 3.2

Set Goals for the Self-Assessment

Directions | You are going to create goals that can support your success in this workshop. But first, let's read a little about goal setting.

What is a goal?

A goal is...

- something we set for ourselves
- something we aim for
- important for achieving success
- helpful to measure progress toward greater ambitions

Financial Goals (Lesson 7) was augmented* to meet the needs of this population

New
content



Existing
content



Objectives Learners will...	Lesson 7 Student Guide Activities
describe their relationship with money (feelings about having, spending, saving)	Activity 7.0: Your Relationship with Money
recognize forms of financial abuse	Activity 7.01: Forms of Financial Abuse
analyze how the four forms of capital each play a role in how much wealth they have	Activity 7.02: The Four Forms of Capital
describe their top three work values in the context of a dream job.	Activity 7.1: Your Work Values and Dream Job
analyze data related to their personal budget and current income to compare their expenses to their income.	Activity 7.2: Comparing Expenses and Income
analyze needs and wants at various income levels to make connections to their long- and short-term financial goals.	Activity 7.3: Identify Needs and Wants with Higher Levels of Income Activity 7.4: Present Your Long- and Short-Term Goals

*Thanks to Futures Without Violence for their invaluable help with enhancing this lesson.

Students create their own Career Education or Training Plan

Activity 20.2 Complete a Career Education Plan

Directions | List each course or program you will complete before going to college. Use as many lines as you need.

MY CAREER EDUCATION/TRAINING PLAN

Before College/Training Steps

Steps (courses or training programs - starting with your current course(s) or program)

Course or Training Program 1

↓

Course or Training Program 2

↓

Course or Training Program 3

↓

Course or Training Program 4

↓

Course or Training Program 5

Activity continues on the next page...

Before College/Training Services

List services you will use to help you complete your training program or classes before going to college or to a training provider:

--

College and/or Career Plan

Focus Area(s): List the Focus Area(s) you expect to study in college, or the Focus Area(s) you are considering to get training in

--

Certificate or Degree: Mark an **X** next to the type of certificate or degree you plan to get.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Associate's Degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor's Degree

Job Interests: List the job(s) you are interested in working. What are the skills and experiences you have had that make this job area a good fit for you?


--

College and Support Services: List support services you will use that can help you succeed in college or in your career path.

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Students learn about support services they can tap once they get to college or job training

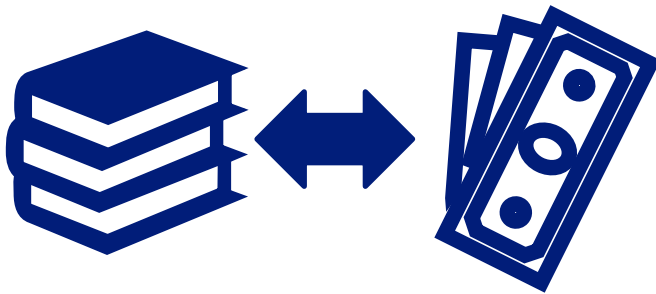
- College Tutoring Services
- Career Planning and Placement
- Wellness Centers
- Childcare
- Academic Advising & Support
- Financial Aid / Scholarship (including through AtB if applicable)
- WIOA Services through the USDOL American Job Centers



Field trips (in person or virtual) strongly encouraged!

Partner Organization Responsibilities

Examples of activities that can be covered at the partner organization:



- Relationship between education & training and expected income



- Career pathway opportunities



- Revisit Career Education or Training Plan

Icon credits: Icons from Microsoft stock images.

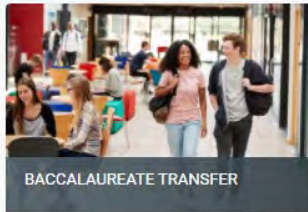
The City Colleges of Chicago online catalog is used as a tool to explore Focus Areas/ career programs



AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION



BACCALAUREATE TRANSFER



BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, AND FINANCE



CULINARY & HOSPITALITY



EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT



HEALTH SCIENCES



HUMAN SERVICES



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



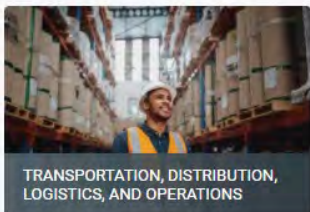
LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY, CORRECTIONS, AND SECURITY



MANUFACTURING



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS



TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, LOGISTICS, AND OPERATIONS

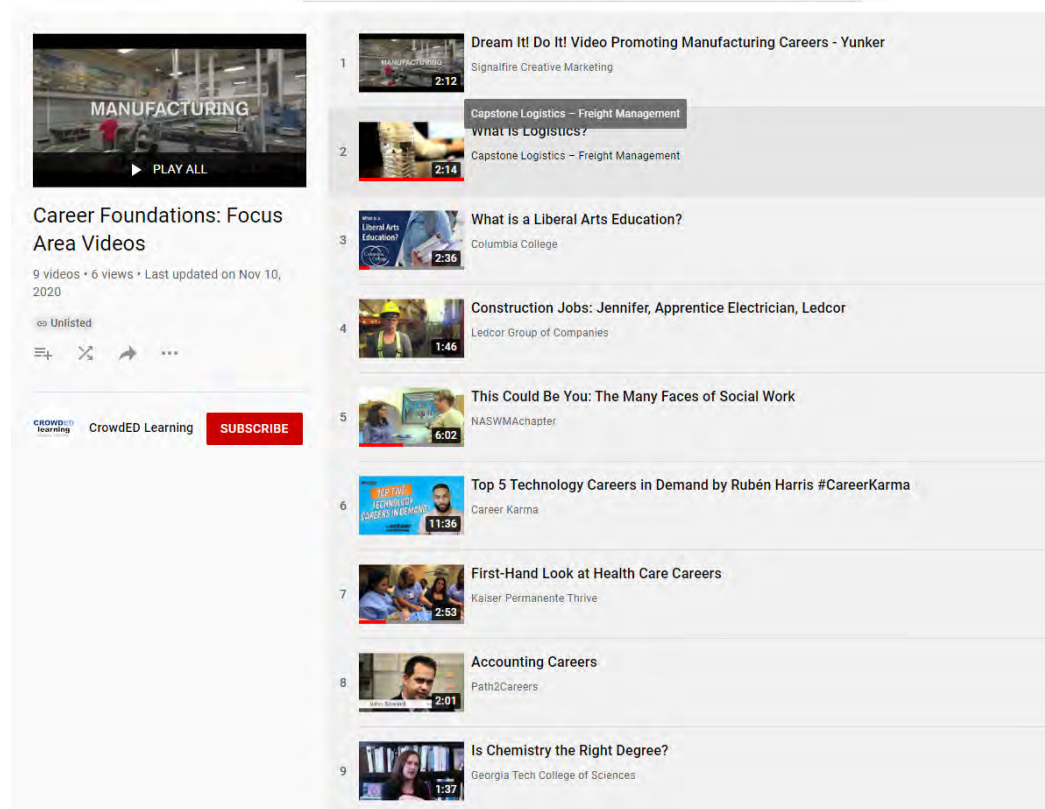


VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION

- Includes all available programs of study including any stackable credentials (certificates and degrees)
- Shows courses and # of credits needed to obtain credentials
- Shows types of jobs available with each credential
- Provides BLS statistics on expected salary ranges, local annual job openings, etc.

Students explore pathways in different ways

[This YouTube video playlist](#) in the curriculum highlights various career pathways.



Participants learn about stackable credentials and career pathways

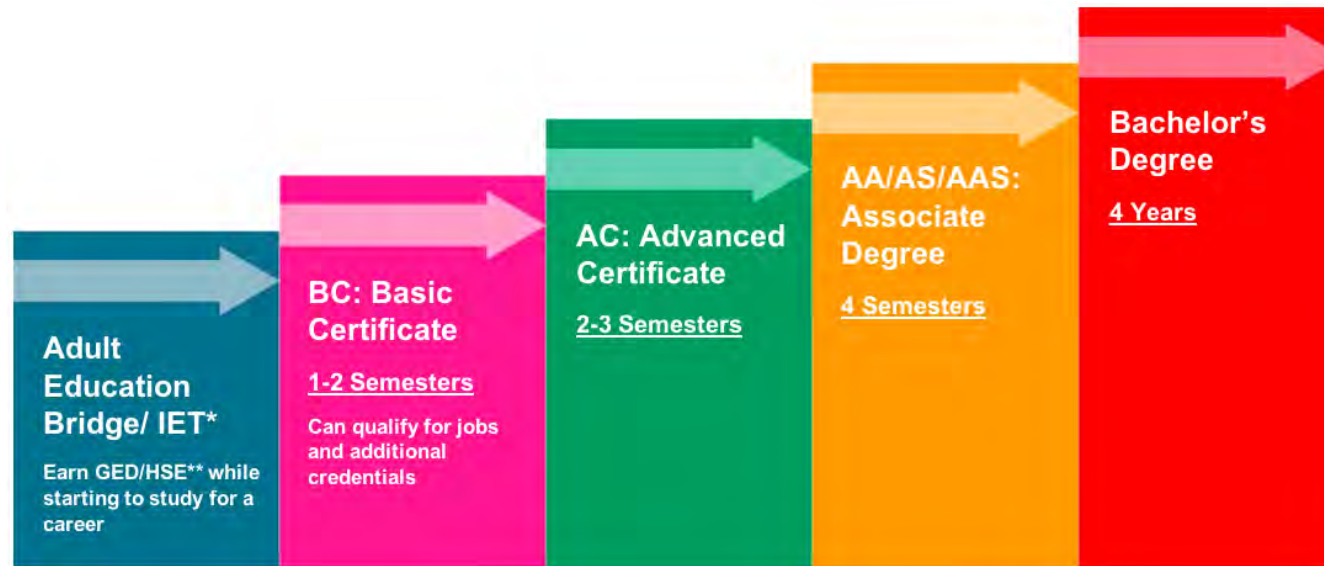
Activity 10.2

Learn About Focus Area Program Options

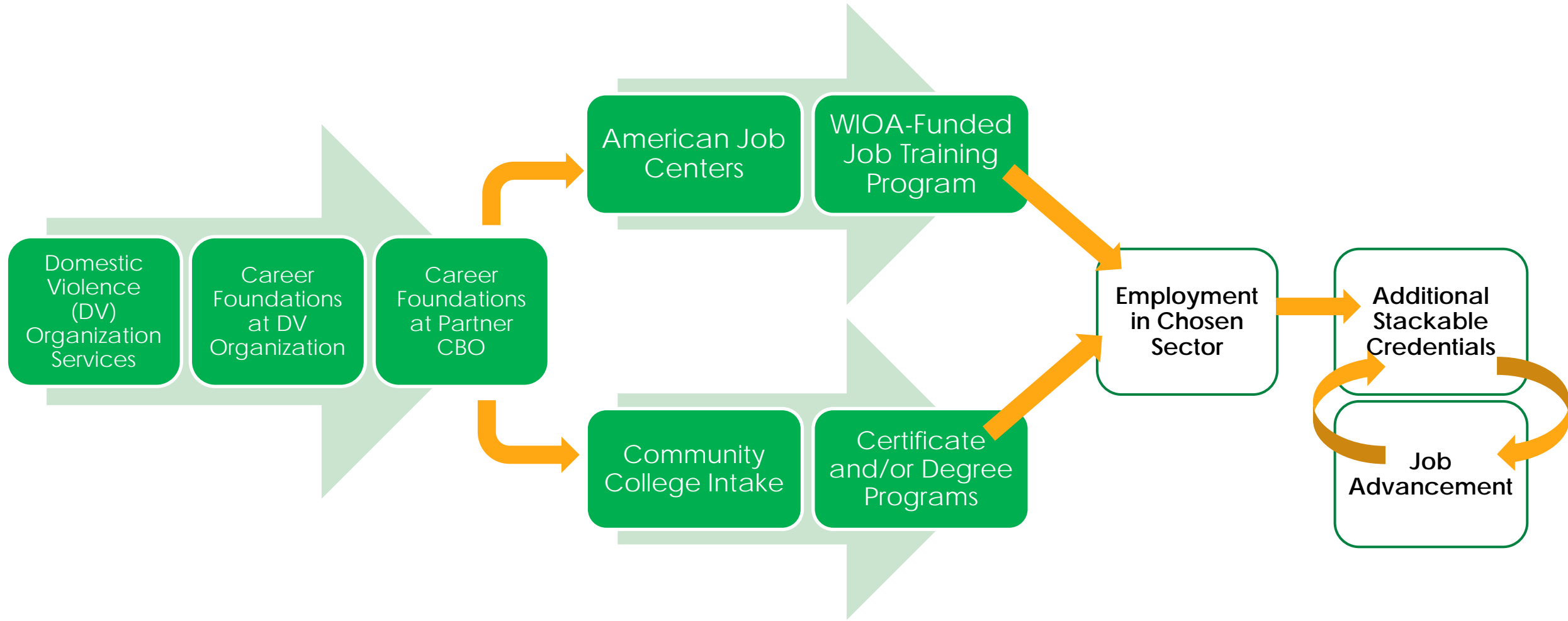
Many community colleges provide what are called “stackable credentials.” These help learners understand the educational steps that are required to reach different levels of their desired career pathway.

Directions | Look at the graphic. Then answer the questions that follow.

Stackable Credentials at a Community College



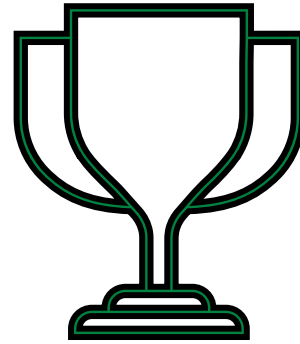
Intersecting Barriers Pilot: The Participant Journey



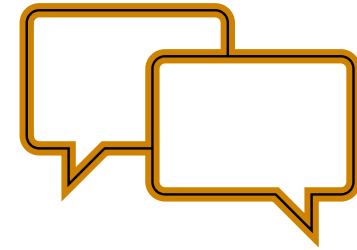
Intersecting Barriers Pilot: What WE've Learned So Far*



- Instructors played an integral role in participant success.



- Career Foundations was empowering for domestic violence survivors.



- Continued and consistent communication with instructors to offer technical assistance and troubleshoot was key.

Icon credits: Icons from Microsoft stock images.

* Findings from Phase I of pilot with Life Span.

Questions



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Additional Project Partner Organizations:
[Chicago Jobs Council](#), [ScaleIT](#)

To request the FREE Career Foundations curriculum or FREE Bridge lesson plans available for six different sectors, visit:

womenemployed.org/bridge-programs-and-career-foundations/

Or scan the QR code below:

