

Glossary

Adult Basic Education (ABE)*— instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for adults with literacy levels generally below the ninth grade.

Adult Education — instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for adults at lower literacy levels; includes adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test.

Associate Degree — the degree awarded after a two-year period of study that can be either terminal (vocational) or transfer (the first two years of a bachelor's degree). The vocational degree is the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and the transfer degree may be either the Associate of Arts (AA) or the Associate of Science (AS).

Basic Skills — fundamental skills such as literacy, reading comprehension, writing, math, and English language competency that are crucial to success in a workplace.

Bridge Program — program designed to prepare individuals, particularly those individuals with literacy levels below ninth grade, to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment.

Career Pathway*— a series of occupations within an industry that build from the relatively minimal skill and education requirements needed for entry-level employment to increasing levels of skills, experience, and/or formal education.

Case Management — the management of the entire range of services offered to a trainee or student. Provides assistance in accessing educational components and support services, developing a career plan, and accessing any other services that will help ensure successful completion of the training program.

Community-Based Organization (CBO) — a nonprofit organization designed to address the needs within a particular community.

Community College — a public two-year institution of higher education, offering instruction in programs adapted to the needs of the community; programs may include adult education, certificate and degree programs, workforce preparation, noncredit continuing education, and customized training for business.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) — federal program aimed at ameliorating the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The funds provide a range of

services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals, including the homeless, migrants, and the elderly.

Competency-Based Curricula — curricula defined in terms of the abilities, knowledge, and skills a student should be able to demonstrate once they have completed the course. The competencies that provide the learning objectives for bridge programs are based on the requirements of entry and success at the next levels of education and employment.

Entry-Level Occupation*— the lowest paid occupations within an industry or firm, usually requiring minimal work experience and limited educational background as conditions for hire. Criteria differ widely from industry to industry.

ESL (English as a Second Language) — programs and classes for persons who lack proficiency in the English language. Classes assist non-native English speakers in obtaining speaking, listening, reading, writing, and math skills.

Field-Specific Bridge Program — a bridge program that prepares adults for college-level occupational certificate programs and advancement to entry-level skilled positions. These programs are geared toward participants who have decided upon a career sector focus.

GED (General Educational Development)*— GED tests are designed to test knowledge and academic skills equivalent to those of a graduate of a United States high school. Knowledge is tested in areas of writing skills, social studies, mathematics, science, literature, and the arts. GED programs provide academic skills instruction geared toward enabling participants to pass the exam and obtain a high school equivalency diploma.

Industry certification — a credential based on standards set by employers in a particular industry or by skilled workers in a given occupation.

Occupational (Vocational) Certificate — a credential earned by completing a training program for a specific industry or career; programs vary in length from one to more than four semesters of full-time study. They are generally state-recognized and thus carry college credit, although this credit does not necessarily transfer to a college degree program.

One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs)*— mandated under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), OSCCs provide employers, job-seekers, and workers with access to resources for employment and training services at a single location; resources at an OSCC

may include access to state agencies such as those administering unemployment insurance.

Sector*— a group of closely interrelated industries that use common technologies or draw on similar resources, such as particular occupations or raw materials (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, transportation).

Soft Skills — nontechnical skills that build an individual's ability to succeed in any workplace. Examples include teamwork, interpersonal communication, working well with supervisors, time management, and conflict resolution.

Support Services — services that enable individuals to participate successfully in work and/or education and training. Student services generally consist of career counseling, academic guidance, academic support, personal guidance, and supplemental resources.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — Time-limited public assistance payments made to poor families, based on Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which was signed into law in 1996, TANF funds may also be used by states to fund job-placement programs for TANF recipients and other low-income populations.

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) — a widely used diagnostic and evaluative tool that measures basic reading, math, and language skills for adults with low literacy levels; often used for program placement, skills assessment, or as a measure of student progress.

Tuition Reimbursement — partial or full payment by employers, public entities, or others for courses that individuals take at educational institutions. Payment is made either to the institution or reimbursed or paid upfront to the employee.

Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) — a federal program created under the Trade Adjustment Act to retrain workers laid off due to increased imports or whose employment was moved to Canada or Mexico. TRA benefits may be payable to eligible workers following exhaustion of their unemployment insurance benefits, if they are participating in or have completed an approved training program.

Vocational Adult Basic Education (VABE) — programs that teach basic literacy skills to native English-speaking students in the context of preparing them to work in a specific occupation.

Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) — programs that teach basic literacy skills to non-native English-speaking students in the context of preparing them to work in a specific occupation.

Workforce Intermediaries — organizations that provide resources such as program-design assistance, assistance evaluation, and others to workforce program providers.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) — the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 supersedes the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and provides a broad range of workforce-development activities through both statewide and local organizations. For more about WIA, see <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/act.cfm>.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Training Funds (Individual Training Accounts)—funds that can be used by registered WIA participants for state and local workforce board-approved training programs. The majority of training funds are distributed through vouchers called Individual Training Accounts, but training contracts are also permissible under federal law.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II — funds that are meant to assist those who lack basic educational skills (including reading, numeracy, and English-language skills), do not have a high school diploma or GED, or who lack literacy in English. Eligible providers include community colleges, regional offices of education, CBOs, public schools, and universities.

Workforce Investment Boards— Local and State (LWIB and SWIB) — advisory committees established under WIA whose purpose is to set policy and direction for implementation of the workforce investment system and, at the state level, to foster cooperation between the government and private sector to meet the workforce preparation needs of employers and workers. Members may consist of businesses, educational entities, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and/or economic development agencies.

*Definitions from *Building Career Ladders for Low-Wage Workers: A "How-to" Manual for Workforce Development Practitioners and Partners*, Claudia Green, Sarah Griffen, Laurie Sheridan Boston Workforce Development Coalition

Endnotes

¹Waldron, T., B. Roberts, and A. Reamer. *Working Hard, Falling Short: America's Working Families and the Pursuit of Economic Security*. Working Poor Families Project, October 2004.

²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey. *Adult Literacy in America, 1992*, prepared by Educational Testing Service (Table 391, prepared February 1994) (Latest data available.) Adults are age 16 and older.

³U.S. Department of Education. *Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2000*. NCES 2004-010. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. November 2003.

⁴*Working Hard*, page 14.

⁵Carnevale, A.P., and D. M. Desrochers. *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-16 Reform*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2003.

⁶U.S. Bureau of Census. *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*. Current Population Reports P23-210. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, July 2002.

⁷Sticht, T., and W. Armstrong. *Adult Literacy in the United States: A Compendium of Quantitative Data and Interpretive Comments*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy, 1994.

⁸Grubb, W. N., *Learning to Work: The Case for Reintegrating Job Training and Education*. New York, NY: Russell Sage, 1996; Sticht, T.G., *The Military Experience and Workplace Literacy: A Review and Synthesis for Policy and Practice*. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy, 1995.

⁹Strawn, J. *Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1998; Strawn, J. and K. Martinson, *Steady Work and Better Jobs: How to Help Low-Income Parents Sustain Employment and Advance in the Workforce*. New York: MDRC, 2000.

¹⁰For more information on the *Employability Skills for Adults* curriculum, contact the Adult Learning Resource Center, Des Plaines, IL (847-803-3535 or www.thecenterweb.org).

¹¹For information on DACUM, see <http://www.dacum.org/index.asp>. For information on WorkKeys, see <http://www.act.org/workkeys/>.

¹²MDRC, "Support Success: Services that May Help Low-Income Students Succeed in Community College," 2004.

¹³Gruber, D. *Using Resources Effectively: An Overview of Funding Resources for Workforce Development Initiatives*. Workforce Strategy Center, November 2004. http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_UsingResources.pdf.

¹⁴www.nnsp.org

¹⁵Hollenbeck, K.M., and W.J. Huang. *Net Impact and Benefit-Cost Estimates of the Workforce Development System in Washington State* (Technical Report No. TR03-018). Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, July 2003; Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. *Workforce Training Results 2002: An Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Training System*. Olympia, WA: Author, March 2003.

¹⁶Prince, D., and D. Jenkins. *Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, April 2005.



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