



# Collaboration Pathways to Adult Success Toolkit

## RECOMMENDATION 1: INITIAL FOCUS & PRIORITIES

Consider the current situation to prioritize local needs and determine the initial focus of collaborations to be developed.

### AREAS OF INITIAL FOCUS

Select areas of initial focus based on the needs identified and the strengths/resources available. Possible focus areas might include:

- Strengthening school outcomes as the best precursor to later success
- Supporting students' transitions and persistence during and following preK-12 education
- Recovering young people in their mid-to-late teens who are disengaged from both school and the workforce (sometimes called "opportunity youth")
- Improving skills to help youth meet employer workforce needs, leading to strengthened economies that benefit everyone
- These are all are worthy goals, but they cannot all be accomplished at once. Careful prioritization is essential.

### ASSESS EXISTING COLLABORATIONS

Identify and assess collaborative relationships already established. For example, these may include:

- PreK-12 districts and schools
- Community and nonprofit [service organizations](#)
- Local two- and four-year colleges
- Businesses and other potential [employers](#)
- Local government or [health and wellness](#) partners



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Consider the strength of each collaborative relationship, the ways partner organizations currently contribute to supporting young people's success, and their potential capacity for additional investment.

### **ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS**

Conduct an assessment of needs and strengths that engages multiple stakeholders.

- This should include all current collaborative partners as well as parents, community members, and current and/or recently graduated students.
- Also reach out to those with whom you would like to develop a stronger relationship (for example, this might include local employers or colleges).
- Give particular attention to outcomes for subgroups of students who face greater challenges (for example, English language learners, foster youth, students with disabilities, etc.).

### **USING DATA TO EVALUATE**

Use the best data currently available to evaluate postsecondary preparation and outcomes for your students. In addition to school-level data such as test scores and graduation rates, seek information on college application, admission, enrollment, and persistence as well as workforce engagement and perseverance. While precise data for a given cohort of students may not be immediately accessible, proxies such as perseverance and completion rates at local community colleges, universities, and job-training programs can provide a starting point.