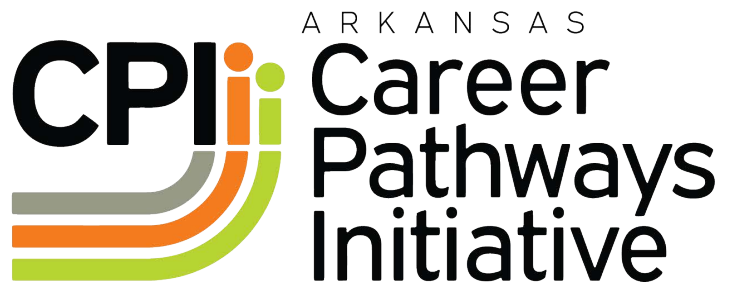


Date of Receipt: _____

Student Signature: _____

I acknowledge through a signature that I received a copy of the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative Handbook. As a recipient of the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative Grant, I recognize my responsibility to maintain the program's requirements.



FY21 Handbook

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-NEWPORT (ASUN)

CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

SITE LOCATIONS

ASU-Newport Career Pathways Initiative Walton

Hall, Room 119

7648 Victory Blvd. Newport, AR 72112

870.512.7856

ASUN-Jonesboro Career Pathways Initiative

Adult Education Center

2601 Martin Luther King Drive

Jonesboro, AR 72401

870.512.7882

ASUN-Marked Tree Career Pathways Initiative

33500 Hwy 63 East

Marked Tree, AR 72365

870.358.8615

FY 21
Career Pathways Staff
Contact Information

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Mission

The Career Pathways Initiative's mission at Arkansas State University - Newport is to assist eligible parents in completing an educational degree and enter a high-wage, high-demand career.

Program Description

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a federally grant-funded program started in 2005 administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) in association with several other state agencies and institutions. Career Pathways provides funding for participating public two-year colleges to offer educational and support services for Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligible recipients students. The Career Pathways program allows participants to earn high-demand academic credentials for immediate entry into high-wage occupations and further educational attainment.

Expectations of Career Pathways Participants:

- Gain education and employability skills
- Find a career pathway and ultimately a career job
- Set and reach educational and personal goals
- Utilize support services that will help lead to personal and professional success
- Have good class attendance and attitude
- Keep in close contact with Career Pathways Case Manager and Career Pathways staff
- Gain employment and stay employed
- After gaining employment, use the Career Pathways program as a way to gain support, problem solve, remain employed, and complete further steps on the Career Pathways plan

Career Pathways Goal: Improve educational and employment outcomes for TANF-eligible adults.

Key individual goals include:

- Improve work participation
- Enhanced basic skills
- Wage progression
- Reduced welfare recidivism
- Increased self-sufficiency
- Increased employability

Program Eligibility

Student Eligibility Criteria

A student must be:

- An Arkansas resident
- Have dependent child(ren), under 21 years of age, living in the home and not out of the household more than 45 calendar days
- Enrolled at or in a program administered at a two-year public college

- Eligible Participants include current TEA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid (and former TEA recipients) whose income is less than or equal to 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPL) guidelines (see chart below).

**Worksheet on Family Income
Eligibility for TANF-Funded Services**

Family Size	2020 Federal Poverty (100%)	(Yearly Total) (X 250%)
2	Less than \$17,240	\$43,100
3	Less than \$21,720	\$54,300
4	Less than \$26,200	\$65,500
5	Less than \$30,680	\$76,700
6	Less than \$35,160	\$87,900
7	Less than \$39,640	\$99,100
8	Less than \$44,120	\$110,300

Required Documentation to Prove Eligibility

- Copy of applicant's Driver's License or State Issued ID
- Social Security Cards (Applicant and child(ren))
- A signed copy of the most recent Federal Tax Return (Forms 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, tax transcript, etc.), tax transcript, or paystubs/check stubs
- Copy of child(ren) Birth Certificate or proof of hospital birth or adoption papers, if applicable

Disclaimer: All documentation and requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the Career Pathways Program, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Department of Workforce Services, and Department of Human Services.

Program Guidelines

Enrollment Process

Attending Career Pathways Orientation is required for all program participants. Any applicant who fails to submit the required eligibility documents and or completes Orientation promptly will have to reapply to the program. Applicants will receive written notification regarding the status of their application.

The Career Pathways Case Manager, or other available staff, will walk each student through the necessary steps to enroll in the Career Pathways program. ASUN's Career Pathways staff will make sure students understand that CPI funding is contingent upon the availability and

appropriation of TANF funds. CPI staff will work hard to make the student's educational journey enjoyable and rewarding.

For current students to receive funding, they will have to be re-certified annually. The re-certification process begins in July, and returning students must provide their previous year's tax forms and submit a new application packet. Upon review of requested documents, applicants will receive written notification of their eligibility.

Intake Process

During the intake process, the student completes an application and submits all documents requested for verification. The students will establish a connection with the CPI staff while setting goals and learning more about the Career Pathways program's rules. Upon determining eligibility and completion of the student file, CPI will mail a letter of eligibility will be sent. At this point, the student begins working on the employability process, which involves learning workplace skills, career assessment, real-life scenarios, and interview skills, along with resume building. Upon completion of their employability, CPI will notify the student of the benefits approved for funding.

Denial of Admission into the Career Pathways Program

Career Pathways reserves the right to deny admission to the program even if the student meets the criteria for admission. Reasons for possible denial may include, but are not limited to:

- A student has a history of abysmal academic performance
- Alteration or falsification of documents
- Violated ASU-Newport's Code of Conduct
- A student does not attend class regularly
- A student does not provide information and documents to the Career Pathways Staff on time
- A student is not an active job seeker
- Student failed school background check
- A student has sufficient funding

Probation/Suspension from Career Pathways

Noncompliance with the Student Handbook will lead to probation or suspension. They will not receive CPI funds and services for the remainder of the enrolled semester and the following semester. The Career Pathways Director may discontinue funding based on the area(s) of noncompliance. The student will receive a notification containing the following information:

- Placement on probationary status,
- Area(s) of noncompliance, and
- Corrective action(s) required
- Excessive noncompliance (will result in immediate suspension from the CPI program)

Students should maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester. Students who have less than a 2.0 for the semester but have a cumulative GPA above 2.0 will be required to meet with a case manager to determine if they will be allowed a probationary semester. Withdrawing from credit courses

without consulting with the case manager will result in being placed on probation. Alteration or falsification of documents will result in immediate suspension.

Students placed on suspension will be notified in writing their status and will not be eligible for continued assistance through the Career Pathways program. Students requesting readmission to the program must meet with the CPI Director to determine eligibility.

Counseling & Academic Advisement Process

Participants must meet with the Career Pathways Case Manager before enrolling for college each semester and monthly after that. The Career Pathways Case Manager reviews student schedules, discuss degree plans, and refer students for academic advising and financial assistance. Students must also meet with their CPI Case Manager to discuss any educational changes, difficulties or barriers encountered, and graduation plans.

The advisement process includes:

- (1) Assessments**
- (2) Remediation programs**
- (3) Financial literacy**
- (4) CPI funding process.**

Our main goal is to help establish a clear picture of each student's skill level to ensure success in the program. The following assessments test, ACT or ACCUPLACER, are used to determine skill levels. If the student has not taken a recent assessment, they are required to take the evaluation.

Students should take the assessment test within one year of applying to college. The assessment test scores allow for better placements. Students may be placed in the College Prep course through ASUN Adult Education Center to improve skill levels to enroll in college-level classes.

Students will receive continuous advisement during their time in the program. The program works to ensure that students have support while seeking an education.

The staff of Career Pathways asks that each student follow the program guidelines:

- All students enrolled in college credit courses should maintain a 2.0 GPA or risk suspension.
- A student who earns less than a 2.0 may be allowed one semester of probation at the director's judgment. The student will be required to meet with a case manager at least once a month during the probationary semester.
- Students who have tuition or courses paid by Career Pathways must see a Career Pathways Case Manager or staff member before making changes to their schedule.

Tuition & Fees

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative is a federally funded program, and all students must complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Eligible students who receive Pell or scholarships will not receive any Career Pathways funds until their Pell and Scholarships are exhausted. If a student receives a Pell denial, students must submit a denial letter from financial aid designating the denial reason.

Students who do not complete a FAFSA are not eligible for any CPI funding. Applications for funding, including tuition/fees, books, fuel, childcare, must be submitted each semester.

The following guidelines determine to fund:

- The student enrolled at any of the ASU- Newport campuses (Newport, Jonesboro, and Marked Tree).
- The student must have and maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- The student must attend class regularly.
- The student completes the Employability process.

Career Pathways understands there are external factors that may have hurt a person's success while attending school. In this misfortune, CPI may assist with funding to give students a second chance at obtaining an education. This decision is on a case-by-case basis. Suppose Career Pathways cannot assist with funding; in that case, our goal is to help the student find assistance through various partnerships in place with other agencies who help students with tuition assistance.

Books & Supplies

To relieve the financial burden of buying textbooks, students who complete the Employability process and have been deemed eligible for funding will be allowed assistance if they do not receive enough funds from either Pell or scholarships. A benefits worksheet must be submitted requesting the need for help with books. Career Pathways will make every attempt to have funding for textbooks and supplies available. **Note: Funding is contingent on TANF fund availability.**

Fuel Assistance

TANF funding allows Career Pathways to assist students with transportation through the issuance of fuel cards. The fuel cards help students drive back and forth to class at ASUN's various campus locations and to and from clinical if required. CPI will not provide fuel cards for the last two weeks of the semester. The CPI case manager verifies class attendance for all students.

TEA eligible students (**must**) submit an employment/work verification form to receive fuel assistance. TANF eligible students (**do not**) need to present an employment/work verification form to receive fuel assistance. The CPI case manager will share a fuel disbursement schedule each semester to inform students of the disbursement schedule. The fuel amount per day for the semester is \$5 per day. The Career Pathways director will evaluate fuel funding to determine if an increase is allowable for subsequent semesters.

Fuel allotment depends on the availability of TANF funds and the number of days the student attends class.

Transportation Assistance Guidelines are as follows:

- The student must have a valid driver's license.
- Fuel is the only allowable purchase on fuel cards.
- 1st offense, the student will be issued a verbal warning.
- 2nd offense, students will be issued a written notice regarding termination of funding. At this point, the CPI Director will determine to suspend all Student Support services.
- Students enrolled in online courses are not eligible for fuel assistance, only under the following circumstances:
 - The class is a hybrid course (requires class attendance for testing or lab usage).
 - The student's home internet service has crashed.
 - The student must provide a signature from the instructor or computer lab personnel verifying their attendance on campus.

Childcare Assistance

Childcare assistance is available for students with children under the age of thirteen. Applicants must first submit a request for childcare assistance through the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine their eligibility through the agency. In the event DHS denies service to the applicant, CPI will determine if childcare funding is available. If approved for childcare funding, the student must attend class regularly. The CPI case manager will verify class attendance with the childcare center days before CPI will submit payment. Career Pathways will pay \$20.00/day for one (1) child per family for the days the student attends class.

Employability

The overall goal of Career Pathways is to use education as a tool to help train students to be prepared to apply for and get hired in high-demand, high-wage jobs. The Employability Certificate will be the first step in assisting students to become ready to excel and accelerate their goals with confidence.

The certificate helps students access career options, develop workplace skills, improve interviewing skills, and create a professional and marketable resume. Eligible Career Pathways students must earn an Employability Certificate before completing a certificate of proficiency, technical certification, or degree. Students must meet basic academic requirements, demonstrate ability with computers, learn workplace skills and job search strategies. Students can work at their own pace to complete the certificate. The Employability Certificate requires coursework in the Pathways lab or your home computer on the below skills.

The following requirements for this certificate are:

1. Complete career assessment
2. Complete ARJobLink through Department of Workforce Services
3. Accomplish keyboard timing-goal of 20 WPM* (Depending on program track)
4. Submit an updated resume and cover letter.
5. Undergo Computer GCF Literacy training
6. OR score a "B" or higher on an approved computer literacy course
7. Complete Job Readiness Training (Employability Certificate)

Career Pathways Services

Students need to be aware that funds are limited and Pathways services are not entitlements. Services available to Pathways students may include:

Childcare Assistance	Individualized Counseling	Workshops
Mentoring services	Fuel assistance	Job placement assistance
Lab/clinical/technical supplies	Employability skills	Tuition, Books, and Fees
Career Counseling	Case Management	Referrals for additional aid
Tutoring	Resume writing workshops	

Skills to be covered, but not limited to:

Interviewing Skills	Communication	Time Management
Self-Esteem	Dress for Success	Workplace Skills
Workplace Safety	Follow Directions	Work Ethics
Dependability	Filling out Forms	Skill in helping to apply for jobs

Career Assessments

Part of the CPI enrollment process is to assist students with their career interests. All participants will be required to take a career assessment. All adult education students will also be required to take the TABE or other equivalent necessary skills assessment, identifying academic basic skills needs.

College Prep Program

The General Adult Education College Prep Program design assists students interested in going to college; however, they may not have the necessary skills to attend. The College Prep Program design helps students achieve the academic skills level that ASU-Newport requires to succeed in college courses. The program offers one-on-one teacher interaction to assist students in areas deemed inefficient according to their test scores. The core emphasis areas are reading, math and language. Computer literacy and employability skills are integrated parts of the curriculum. All of the classes are free and open to adults aged 18 or older. The main goal is to help the student go directly into college credit courses.

Change of information

All eligible students receiving CPI funds must provide current contact information to the Career Pathways staff. If there is ever a change in their mailing address, phone number, etc., it is required they inform the office of this change as soon as possible so CPI staff can make necessary corrections in the database.

Withdrawal/Completion

Students will be withdrawn from the program if they do not maintain contact with their Counselor/Student Advisor for one quarter of the fiscal year. If a student drops out or is withdrawn administratively before completing a degree or certificate, the student can reapply for the CPI program one more time. Re-enrollment after withdrawal is at the discretion of the Career Pathways' Director and on a case-by-case basis. No student will be allowed to "enroll in" the program more than twice.

A student who earns a certificate or degree while in Career Pathways and CPI subsequently withdraws them from the program; the student becomes a "Completer." The Case Manager will continue to offer employment-related support services for one year from degree completion. The employment support services will allow the Case Manager direct contact with the student to ensure that the student has complete the process of finding employment in a high-wage, high-demand field.