



Program Summary

The purpose of the Gateway Program is to teach eligible youth essential job skills while providing career awareness, career counseling, and assist in developing career pathways for Gateway participants. Career awareness will be provided to Gateway participants about the Mississippi Partnership Sector Strategy target industries which include: (1) Advanced Manufacturing, (2) Healthcare, (3) Information Technology, (4) Logistics – warehousing, transportation, and distribution, and (5) Energy. Gateway participants will be strongly encouraged to pursue careers in one of the target industry sectors.

Our goal with each individual is to provide one-on-one counseling to develop a “truly personalized” Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that helps the individual with short-term school/career goals as well as long term. Military Exploration will be made available to each individual during the counseling process if the individual has a desire/interest in that career field. A connection to a career pathway must be included in the ISS.

The Gateway Program Provider must make available, either by providing the service themselves or through an agreement with another agency, the 14 required WIOA program elements. The Gateway Program Provider must also provide 2 required local program elements: (1) essential job skills training, which is required before a youth may receive paid work experience and (2) access for a youth to take the ACT WorkKeys Assessments in Graphic Literacy, Applied Math, and Workplace Documents if needed. All of these elements are described in further detail in Section 3 of this Operations Manual.

Each Gateway participant will be required to complete essential job skills training. Minimum topics to be included in the essential job skills training are:

- Appearance/Dress
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Getting Along with Others & Teamwork
- Communication
- Attitude
- Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
- Financial Awareness
- Completing I-9 & Tax Forms

Once essential job skills training is complete, the individual will receive a certificate of completion. Participants will be eligible to receive a paid work experience/internship after completing essential job skills training. The Gateway staff will be responsible for finding an appropriate worksite that helps achieve the goals set by the individual outlined in the individual’s ISS. It is strongly encouraged that worksites be developed for the four target industry sectors when possible.

Each worksite will be carefully chosen and each worksite supervisor will also receive one-on-one training to help them understand the importance of the individual's work experience. All employers will be offered a temporary worker complete with pay, worker's compensation insurance, etc. The employer's responsibilities are quite simple: ensure that the individual uses the skills that were taught during essential job skills training and continue to be a positive mentor for the individual along the way.

The Gateway counselor will be responsible for ensuring each individual has completed the short-term steps outlined in their ISS including:

- ✓ completing the essential job skills training and receiving a certificate of completion
- ✓ completing work experience/internship component
- ✓ obtaining a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) if needed
- ✓ developing a career pathway for their long-term goals in their ISS
- ✓ remaining in high school on track to graduate OR receiving a high school diploma (in-school youth only)
- ✓ entering college, advanced training, military or workforce

After completion of short-term goals it is time to begin working towards the individual's long-term goals which should include furthering their education by enrolling into college or receiving technical training or obtaining full-time employment. The Gateway staff will assist the individual with developing a career pathway for their long term goals prior to exit.

Each Gateway Program Provider will be responsible for 12 months of follow-up after exit on each individual that enrolls in the Gateway Program.