

MyCareerForward (MCF) is an initiative that seeks to connect growing industries, talent diversity goals, local workforce training and higher education in the Pittsburgh region so that the working poor have more clearly defined, digestible, and supported pathways into high-wage occupations.



PURPOSE

MCF represents an Economic Mobility Model aimed at providing the ALICE population in the Pittsburgh Region with skills-based talent matching. Doing so will allow learners and earners to stack skills into higher level skills and credentials for career progression and sustainable living wages.

WHY MY CAREER FORWARD?

Talent and job seekers enter the pipeline via various access points such as American Job Centers, community-based organizations, recruiters, job boards, training providers and educational institutions. In an ideal world, talent comes out on the other side of the pipeline, gainfully employed. However:

- Due to the various interactions & challenges that learners/earners can experience along the education to employment continuum, opportunities are hard to navigate, choices are often overwhelming, and the pipeline typically develops leaks – though they're not always visible.
- By improving communication and focusing on the learner/ job-seeker journey, we can seal the cracks and stop the leaks.
- The success of educators, employers, and entire communities depends on empowering adult learners to make the right choices where they can realize their full potential within a well-aligned industry, education, and workforce ecosystem.
- It is critical to build partnerships that center adult learners and workers in initiatives that span the continuum from education to employment.

CAEL ENGAGES TO:

- Bridge silos between various stakeholders and strengthen the ecosystem to help adult learners and workers across their journey.
- Surface and connect a robust supportive services network to low/no cost training education partners and higher education institutions.
- Leverage credit for prior learning (CPL) to stack programs into higher education partner programs.
- Provide career and CPL Navigators (trained by CAEL) to coach ALICE population to select the right career path and then access the most efficient path to degree credential
- Support the gathering of disaggregated outcomes data to measure impact.

CAEL's Vision

Every adult can navigate lifelong learning and career pathways that fuel economic mobility and community prosperity.

CAEL's Mission

CAEL engages with educators, employers, and community leaders to align learning and work so that adults achieve continuous, long-term career success.

HOW WILL WE ACCOMPLISH THIS?

1) Expand outreach to the ALICE population.

- In Allegheny County, 30.4% of workers with less than a high school degree live below the poverty level.
- For workers with only a high school degree, 14.5% live below the poverty level as well.
- Upskilling this specific population could have significant impact on the region – moving these workers to educational attainment could improve the economic position of tens of thousands of workers, potentially moving over 7,700 workers from below a high school degree to having a diploma equivalency and some postsecondary training.
- It could also mean building skills & credentials for over 24,500 workers with no post-high school training.

2) Increase access to, and usage of, short-term credentials – leading to stacking of low/no-cost credentials into higher level degrees with credit for prior learning (CPL).

3) Intentional engagement with employers to ensure hiring processes on each rung of the ladder are smooth, and that the jobs on pathways are in demand (this includes employer participation in identification of in-demand roles, career pathways mapping and skills identification).

4) Enhance data interoperability for all groups impacting learners and job seekers by providing a connected suite of data-informed technology tools that track the learner/earner's journey, aggregate results into a "live data dashboard" and improve job placement.

Overall, increasing communication and visibility will enable MCF stakeholder groups to:

- Expand their reach to populations that are underserved due to limited resources or capacity.
- Provide access to human-centered solutions that meet workers where they are and empower them to continue on their journey to a better life.
- Further mobilize employers and skill development partners to provide clear pathways for workers.
- Greater enhance workers' sense of choice and voice in making career and skill development decisions.
- Strengthen the ability to capture data on the impact of initiatives, services, and skill development. Ensure workers have the means, opportunity, and wherewithal to thrive and succeed.

By offering an end-to-end solution and tracking the learner journey – from initial outreach, to training, to educational attainment, and ultimately to employment – MyCareerForward will offer tactical opportunities to upskill, provide needed supports and services to set learners and earners up for success, drive higher rates of job placement as a result of clear alignment with employer demand, and improve economic growth for the region.

JOIN US!

Contact Dana Levine Kunzman at dkunzman@consultants.cael.org for more information.

About CAEL

Recognizing that adult learners are the backbone of the U.S. economy, CAEL helps forge a clear, viable connection between education and career success, providing solutions that promote sustainable and equitable economic growth. CAEL opens doors to opportunity in collaboration with workforce and economic developers; postsecondary educators; employers and industry groups; and foundations and other mission-aligned organizations. By engaging with these stakeholders, CAEL fosters a culture of innovative, lifelong learning that helps individuals and their communities thrive. A national membership organization established in 1974, CAEL is a mission-driven nonprofit. Learn more at cael.org.

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