



CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE
Participant Handbook
2017-2018

Office Hours and Contact Information

Hours of Operation

Fall and Spring

Monday through Friday: 8:00am-4:30pm

Summer

Monday through Thursday: 7:00am-5:30pm

Friday 8:00am-12:00pm

College of the Ouachitas

Career Pathways Initiative

One College Circle

Student Affairs and B102

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Career Pathways Origin:

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative is a comprehensive project designed to improve the earnings and post-secondary education attainment of Arkansas' low-income Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) –eligible adults. The initiative provides funding for two-year colleges to develop pathway programs that assist TANF-eligible adults earn a marketable educational credential for immediate entry into a high demand, high wage occupation. The Career Pathways Initiative emphasizes such program components as job readiness skills, basic academic skills preparation-remediation, and post-secondary credentials tied to high wage, high demand occupations.

The Mission of Career Pathways:

The mission of the Career Pathways Program here at *College of the Ouachitas* is to assist eligible participants in meeting their education and employment training goals in order to acquire and maintain a self-sustaining job and career pathway. Career Pathways provide intensive student services as well as financial services that can include tutoring, book & supply loans, transportation vouchers, tuition, book, course related supplies and employment training.

Expectations of Career Pathways Participants:

- To gain education and skills needed to be self-sufficient.
- To choose a career pathways for a fulfilling job or career.
- To take advantage of support services that will assist in success efforts.
- Keep a positive attitude and participate in all events sponsored by Career Pathways and College of the Ouachitas.
- To gain employability skills.
- Keep the Career Pathways staff informed regarding your employment status after leaving the program.
- To meet with the Career Pathways Director for monthly progress.
- **Students may only enroll in the program twice after being dropped (or director's discretion).**

Criteria For Acceptance Into The Pathways Program:

Participants may be eligible for the Pathways Program if they meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Be an Arkansas Resident.
- ✓ Have dependent child/children (under 21 years old) that live with you. (This may include adult caretaker or relative of the dependent child who will require additional information). (If a child turns 21 years of age by re-verification date, you will not be re-enrolled in the program).
- ✓ Receive SNAP benefits, Medicaid, or child/children receiving ARKids.
- ✓ Family household income is less than 250% of the poverty guidelines.

Size of Family Unit	TANF-Eligible Income Eligibility Standards (250%-100% FPL)	Low-Income Eligibility Standards (100% FPL)
2	\$40,600-\$16,240	Less than \$16,240
3	\$51,050-\$20,420	Less than \$20,420
4	\$61,500-\$24,600	Less than \$24,600
5	\$71,950-\$28,780	Less than \$28,780
6	\$82,400-\$32,960	Less than \$32,960
7	\$92,850-\$37,140	Less than \$37,140
8	\$103,300-\$41,320	Less than \$41,320

Documentation Needed For Enrollment:

- Copy of child/children's birth certificates or proof of birth.
- Copy of child/children's social security cards.
- Copy of ARKids card and proof from DHS showing receipt of DHS assistance.
- Copy of student's GED scores, high school transcript or college transcript.(if applicable)
- Copy of household's Federal Income Tax forms. i.e. 1040. Participant cannot use parent's tax information because the parent is not enrolling in the program.
- Career Pathways Application
- Arkansas Driver's License or State ID

Participants cannot be enrolled until all eligibility documents are received and employability certificates requirements are met.

Eligibility for participants will be verified annually after original enrollment. Participants may be asked to provide documents from DHS, tax forms and sign new release forms. **Participants are required to apply for financial aid each year.**

Denial to Career Pathways Program:

The Career Pathways staff reserves the right to deny admission to the program even if the students meet the criteria for admission. Reason for possible denial may include:

- Participant has a history of very poor academic performance (SAP).
- Participant is disrespectful/abusive toward staff or other students.

- Failure to attend class regularly.
- Alteration or falsification of documents.
- Failure to provide required information and documentation in a timely manner.
- Exceeding the amount of times allowed for enrollment.
- Exceeding the standard time to complete a credential or degree i.e. two-year degree which is 150% of completion or six (6) semesters.
- Failure to decide on a Career Pathway i.e. degree plan.
- If you have an undergraduate degree that would allow employment in a high demand occupation for the region.
- Being a Felon.

Felons may be eligible unless convicted of a felony charge connected with distribution or manufacture of a controlled substance. Possession conviction does not cause ineligibility. A felony conviction (occurring since July 1, 1977) involving distribution or manufacture of a controlled substance, results in applicant being ineligible. Rehabilitation does not change ineligibility. Ineligibility applies to applicants convicted of a felony drug charge involving distribution or manufacture whether incarcerated for the conviction or not. This requirement is in accordance with Arkansas state law governing the Arkansas TANF program. Your CPI eligibility might be denied if the offense occurred while you were receiving federal student aid.

Probationary Status:

Participants who fail to comply with the provisions of their Career Pathways contract will be placed on probation for either the following semester or for the remainder of the current semester. Services may be discontinued at the Director's discretion based on the area(s) of noncompliance. Participant will be informed of probationary status, the area of noncompliance, corrective actions required, and a timeframe for engaging in the required actions. Multiple instances of noncompliance may result in dismissal of the program.

It is the policy of the Career Pathways Program at College of the Ouachitas to assign the status of "**Career Pathways Probation**" to any Career Pathways participant whose academic performance falls below a 2.0 GPA for the previous semester as a Career Pathways participant or who fails to make a "C" or better in any class/classes during a single semester at any institution of higher learning. Also includes a participant who has reneged on their Financial Aid Appeals which causes Financial Aid Denial. The probation period will be served during the participants next enrolled semester. The same goes to participants who withdraw from two or more classes the previous semester and childcare was paid for those dropped classes.

Basic Probation (anyone failing one class/or dropping a class CPI paid childcare for previous semester).

- Meet monthly with Career Pathways Counselor.
- Forfeit assistance for child care and/or transportation
- Attend all Career Pathways scheduled meetings and events

**Advanced Probation (anyone failing two or more classes/or withdrawing two or more classes
CPI paid childcare for previous semester)**

- Meet weekly with Career Pathways Counselor
- Attend all Career Pathways scheduled meeting and events
- Forfeit assistance for child care and transportation
- Mandatory focus studying and/or tutoring for at least one hour twice per week.

Participant Reneging on Financial Aid Appeals which causes Financial Aid Denial

- Forfeit assistance for childcare and/or transportation assistance

If your present GPA increases, the director will decide if participant will be reinstated the following semester. Please inquire for any questions.

Career Pathways Program Performance Standards include but are not limited to the following: Satisfactory Academic Progress
Dropping a class without notification to Pathways staff may result in denial of future Pathways assistance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Assessments:

A major part of the Career Pathways enrollment process is to assist with career interest. All participants will be required to take a Career Assessment and soft skills training.

Mandatory Meetings:

Participants will be required to meet with the Director at least once a month.

Workshops:

Participants **will be required** to attend scheduled workshops throughout the semester.

Change of Information:

It is very important for the Career Pathways staff to have current, correct participant contact information. Participants changing mailing addresses, phone numbers, etc. should contact their counselor as soon as possible in an effort to make necessary corrections.

Academic Advising:

Participants are required to meet with their appointed *College of the Ouachitas* Academic Advisor before enrolling each semester. Career Pathways Staff will review schedules and discuss degree plan.

CAREER PATHWAYS SERVICES

Participants should be aware that Career Pathways is a grant and funds are limited; therefore, services are not entitlements.

Services available to pathways students that meet eligibility requirements but not limited to:

Career Counseling

Academic Advising

Tutoring Referral

Community Resources

Job Search

Employment Training

Employability Certificate

Tuition and Fees

Books

Childcare assistance

Course related supplies

Course loans i.e. calculator

Nursing supplies

Cosmetology Kit

CAREER PATHWAYS ASSISTANCE

In order to receive **ANY** financial services from Career Pathways at College of the Ouachitas, the following requirements must be met:

- ✓ Complete all requirements for the Employability Certificate, Career Assessment; updated resume, registering with Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Keyboarding – 20 WPM; and computer literacy, Soft-Skills Training, Individual Career Plan (ICP) and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and employment information.

CHILDCARE INFORMATION

ALLOWABLE CHARGES:

*Childcare payments are available only to those that attend more than six (6) credit hours on the same day. Participants are responsible for childcare enrollment fees. Pathways **will only** pay for daycare when the participant is attending class or involved in a school related activity. Pathways **will not pay** for holidays or days when the participant is absent from class. **In these instances, the parent will be responsible for that day.** Also, if the parent drops out of school and still takes his/her child to daycare, the participant is responsible for any expenses incurred from the last day of attendance.*

Participants are required to turn in work verification, attendance forms, and schedules as well as keep appointments with the counselor **each month**, in order to be eligible for daycare assistance. If a participant delays turning in work verification and attendance form, the payment for daycare will be delayed. If the participant does not, for whatever reason, turn in

work verification and an attendance form, or does not see the counselor during required times, then the participant is responsible for that month.

WORK VERIFICATION, MONTHLY PROGRESS FORM AND AN ATTENDANCE FORM WITHIN THE BILLING MONTH, IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO PAY FOR DAYCARE EXPENSES.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

The gas voucher or SCAT pass amount is based on the distance from your city to campus and is redeemable for **FUEL ONLY**. No change will be returned if your vehicle does not hold the full amount of fuel listed on the voucher. A gas schedule will be provided each semester. Monthly progress forms will be available a week before the scheduled due date. If you fail to turn in monthly progress forms by the set deadline, you will not be eligible for transportation assistance for the month and subject to disciplinary action.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

All participants must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) PRIOR to receiving financial assistance from Career Pathways. Funding is limited and any other aid must be applied to the participant's account and expended before CPI funds will be requested or utilized. In order to receive tuition assistance, the following conditions must be met:

- ✓ **All PELL funds must be exhausted.**
- ✓ GPA of 2.0 or above for the previous semester.
- ✓ Must contact counselor at least two times per month.
- ✓ Must turn in monthly progress forms as scheduled.

Payment of tuition for one semester is not a guarantee of future tuition payments. Requests for assistance will be evaluated at the beginning of each semester. CPI tuition payments will be for tuition and fees for the current semester. Any drop/add fees or balances from previous semesters will not be covered.

Participants who have exhausted their Lifetime Eligibility Used (LEU) will be considered for tuition and fee assistance on a case-by-case basis. Awarding assistance under this circumstance will be limited. For additional information, please contact any Career Pathways staff. Refer to page 4.

BOOK ASSISTANCE

All financial aid must be exhausted before Pathways will assist with book purchase.

CAREER PATHWAYS STUDENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

(This page for student file)

Students in the COTO Career Pathways Program are eligible to receive services and participate in activities that will increase your chances of succeeding academically and graduating. These services are offered without regard to gender, race, color, sex, handicap, age, or national origin. The program and staff will make this commitment to you. In return, we ask that you make the following commitment to us:

I, (print name) _____ have received a copy of the *COTO Career Pathways Handbook*. I agree to the following action(s) to ensure my academic success and guarantee my continued eligibility in the Pathways Program. I will read and abide by the policies set forth in the Career Pathways Handbook. If I need clarification on anything in the handbook, I will ask questions before signing this form.

- I accept responsibility for my own academic success and agree to abide by the requirements of the Career Pathways Program.
- I accept and understand the service/s provided to me may be discontinued at any time if funding is no longer available.
- I accept and understand that if my grade point average drops below a 2.0 or if my instructors report compliance issues, the services offered to me may be discontinued.
- I agree to keep all scheduled appointments with the Career Pathways Staff.
- I agree to notify the Career Pathways staff of any change of address, phone number, email, or school/employment status.
- I agree to attend and participate in advisement sessions, career exploration, financial advisement, counseling sessions, academic, and student success workshops as advised by the program.
- I agree to return any books/supplies that have been loaned to me by the Career Pathways Program.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Career Pathways Team Member: _____ Date: _____

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