Career and Adult Education and Workforce Development

At RTI International, we believe that preparing people for a successful future—and ensuring that our country remains economically competitive—requires changing how we educate youth and adults. It means readying individuals for both postsecondary education and the workforce and ensuring they have the skills, certifications, and degrees employers value.

Areas of Expertise

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**—Our research team is working to strengthen how CTE instruction is organized and delivered. This includes evaluating CTE programs and policies at the federal and state levels to improve student transitions to postsecondary education and careers.

- **Adult Education**—Adult education programs help individuals build basic skills, setting these individuals on a path for success in education, training, and employment. We work to support the education and employment success of adult education students by conducting research and developing and disseminating resources. These include professional development and technical assistance materials, websites, and policy briefs designed to advance best practice in the field.

- **Correctional Education**—Nearly 1 million people are released from prison each year, with another 5 million under community supervision. We work to improve correctional education and reentry services through research, technical assistance, and program evaluation.

- **Statewide Career Pathways**—Our work promotes program alignment that supports individuals as they navigate multiple pathways to careers. We conduct research and design policies to ease student transitions between secondary, postsecondary, and adult education and from education into the workforce.

- **Accountability and Performance Measurement**—Accountability and performance measurement systems allow policymakers and educators to assess and improve programs. We design performance indicators, create web-based data management tools, collect and analyze data, and develop reporting and dissemination strategies that transform data into relevant and useful information.

- **Education Finance Systems**—We design distribution formulas to allocate state resources efficiently and fairly. We specialize in creating performance-based funding (PBF) systems to incentivize and reward local providers who exceed their performance targets.

**Project Highlights**

**National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education (NCICTE).** In July 2012, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the NCICTE to a consortium of educational research organizations headed by RTI. The NCICTE performs scientifically based research and evaluation; disseminates information; and conducts trainings to expand the understanding, increase the effectiveness, and improve the implementation of CTE.
New Skills for Youth National Evaluation. JPMorgan Chase is investing $75 million to expand high-quality career-focused education programs for youth as part of its New Skills at Work initiative. Working in collaboration with the Council of Chief State Schools Officers and Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work, JPMorgan Chase has launched a competitive grant program to support states in designing and implementing rigorous, demand-driven career pathways that prepare students to succeed in high-skill and high-wage jobs. We are conducting the evaluation of this national, multi-year initiative that will entail conducting annual site visits and collecting detailed performance data from each participating state.

Advancing CTE in State and Local Career Pathways. Comprehensive statewide career pathway systems connect and sequence education, training, and student support services to prepare individuals to advance to higher levels of education and employment. We recently partnered with Jobs for the Future in a U.S. Department of Education–funded project in a multi-year project to support five states in integrating CTE programs of study into their broader career pathway systems.

Aligning College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Adult Basic Education. We are working with subject matter experts to examine how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) can be applied to adult education and the implications of aligning the CCSS with adult education and the National Reporting System for adult education programs.

Strengthening Programs Through Performance-Based Funding. PBF can promote equity, strengthen accountability, and improve local programs. Since 2006, we have been helping states create funding formulas that incorporate PBF by convening state task forces, aligning state goals with funding criteria, modeling funding formulas, and creating plans to implement the formulas.

National Assessment of Career and Technical Education (NACTE). Since the 1980s, we have participated in each congressionally mandated National Assessment and led the 2008–2014 research effort. These studies, conducted in preparation for the next reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, provided detailed analyses of CTE in the United States. A final report to Congress highlighting study findings was released in 2014.

Using a Common Framework for Employability Skills. Employability skills are key to preparing individuals for college and career. We led a U.S. Department of Education–funded project to create an interactive framework and online resources to inform employability skill instruction and assessment. We also developed a training module on integrating employability skills into instruction at all levels and are delivering the module in a variety of education contexts. Access the framework at http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills and the module at www.ccrcscenter.org.

Evaluating Postsecondary Education Reentry Programs. We are collaborating with the RAND Corporation to evaluate the Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Project, a 5-year initiative led by the Vera Institute to support three states in expanding access to higher education for the incarcerated and reentry support services for those recently released. We are evaluating whether the initiative increases educational credentials, reduces recidivism, raises employment and earnings, and improves the quality of life in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime.

More Information
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