Minutes of the South Carolina Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD)
Pathways Committee Meeting
09/29/2026, 11:00 AM, MS Teams

ATTENDEES

Dr. Jeff Perez, President, SC Commission on Higher Education (Committee Co-Chair)

Dr. James Thompson, Workforce Development Manager, SC Commission on Higher Education (Committee Coordinator)

Marlena Isaac, Consultant, Office of Statewide Workforce Development, SCDEW (Committee OSWD Liason)

Carol Hayman, Analytics Coordinator, Labor Market Information, SCDEW (Committee OSWD Liason)

Faith Kithome, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Labor Market Information, SCDEW

Alex Tomlinson, Executive Assistant, SCDEW

Laura Cox, Statewide Director of Regional Workforce Advisors, SCDEW

Patricia Ferguson, Trident Regional Workforce Advisor, SCDEW

Dr. Salandra Bowman, Chief Learning Officer, SCETV

Ann Lefebvre, Executive Director, MUSC

Jonathan Valentine, Enterprise Director Workforce Development, MUSC

Casey Woodling, Director, Pre-College & College Pathway Programs, CCU

Kelly Gregory, Director, Public Education Projects and Partnerships, Furman University

Callie Price, Director of Workforce and Policy, SC Competes

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Overview

The Pathways Committee convened to review the current pathway inventory, establish a common definition of a career pathway, and identify priorities for integrating pathway information into the statewide Find Your Future portal.

The committee reached broad consensus on the following priorities:

- Establish a common CCWD definition of a "pathway" and advance it to CCWD for approval.
- Focus on developing an accessible intake and discovery experience that helps users identify relevant pathways.
- Define the core components of pathway information, including skills, credentials, and next steps.
- Select a practical pathway as a straw man to test the committee's approach and inform portal content and functionality.

The shared Excel inventory was presented as an environmental scan of existing pathway initiatives, including project ownership, scope, audience, and purpose. Participants represented state agencies, higher education, healthcare, workforce partners, and technology organizations.

Pathway Inventory

The committee reviewed the shared pathway inventory and discussed its intended use and limitations.

Key points included:

- Members were asked to review the spreadsheet and identify missing projects, owners, project managers, scope, audiences, and purposes.
- The inventory should instead serve as a living environmental scan that provides a current snapshot of existing efforts.
- Organization representatives should review the inventory with their respective agencies and complete missing information.
- A reasonably comprehensive snapshot will be provided to the Executive Committee.

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Common Definition of "Pathway"

The committee reviewed the proposed CCWD definition of a career pathway and expressed broad support for adopting it as common council-wide terminology.

Decision: Advance the proposed definition to CCWD for formal approval and use as shared guidance across subcommittees and partner organizations.

Members also emphasized that pathway information should extend beyond program names to include meaningful components such as:

- Skills developed
- Required credentials
- Entry points
- Potential next steps
- Opportunities for advancement
- Whether a credential is terminal or provides opportunities for continued progression

Portal Integration and Technical Considerations

The portal RFP is scheduled for release this week and will help establish the technical capabilities and parameters available to the committee.

The committee discussed:

- Inviting the portal manager to a future meeting to provide an overview of current and planned functionality.
- Understanding how pathway information, intake forms, employer and education connections could be incorporated into the portal.
- Potential use of existing technologies, including automated intake tools, transcription, and recommendation engines.
- Designing the experience to accommodate both users who have a specific career goal and those who need assistance exploring their options.
- Prioritizing a user-friendly, mobile-first experience.

The technology solutions discussed were considered potential options for future exploration rather than prescribed requirements.

Intake, Skills-First Approach, and User Experience

The committee expressed strong support for a skills-first approach and an intake or discovery process that could help users identify realistic pathway options.

Potential approaches discussed included:

- A short intake questionnaire
- Transcript integration
- Skills identification and matching
- Recommended next steps
- Estimated time and cost associated with credentials
- Employer training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Connections to education and workforce providers

Members emphasized the importance of presenting information in a clear, accessible, and actionable format, particularly for students, parents, and first-generation users.

The committee also discussed the importance of building pathways from the entry point upward, clearly identifying available opportunities, and the progression from one credential or opportunity to the next.

Straw-Man Pathway

To move the committee's work from conceptual discussion toward practical application, members agreed to select a relatively straightforward pathway to serve as a straw man.

The test case will be used to:

- Apply the proposed pathway definition.
- Identify the minimum information needed to describe a pathway.
- Test potential intake fields.
- Determine how pathway information should be presented within the portal.
- Illustrate progression, laddering, and terminal credentials.
- Identify gaps or additional data requirements.

Nursing was discussed as a potential example; however, its complexity may make it less suitable as an initial test case.

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Decisions and Next Steps

The committee agreed to the following actions:

1. Advance the proposed CCWD pathway definition for formal review and approval.
2. Continue refining intake and discovery concepts, with an emphasis on a skills-first approach.
3. Use the pathway inventory as an environmental scan and have committee members update missing information between meetings.
4. Invite the portal manager to the next committee meeting to discuss technical capabilities, functionality, and opportunities for integration.
5. Select a practical pathway as a straw man to test the committee's definition, data requirements, and potential portal presentation.
6. Use the straw-man exercise to identify minimum pathway components and inform future content and portal requirements.

Other

The next meeting is expected to incorporate portal representation and a concrete pathway example to further validate assumptions and inform the portal's content structure and functionality.

With no time left, Dr. Perez adjourned at 12:03pm.