

# Jobs to Careers

*Transforming the Front Lines  
of Health Care*

## Educational Institution and Workforce Intermediary Self-Assessment: Organizational Readiness for Implementing a Work-Based Learning or Career Pathways Program

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



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**T**his tool will help *educational and workforce intermediary partners* assess their readiness for implementing innovations in the area of work-based learning and career pathway initiatives for frontline health care workers. Educational institutions and workforce intermediaries can assess their strengths and limitations related to policies, practices, and processes that are likely to contribute to the successful implementation and adoption of such initiatives. After completing the tool, organizations may want to address areas identified through the self-assessment to boost their prospects

for successfully implementing work-based learning for frontline workers in health care.

The organizational self-assessment tool is based on experiences gained by the 17 projects supported by *Jobs to Careers: Promoting Work-based Learning for Quality Care*. A five-year, \$15.8 million national initiative, *Jobs to Careers* is dedicated to improving the quality of care for patients and communities by changing the way frontline workers are trained, rewarded, and advanced in careers. This tool was developed by Jennifer Craft Morgan and Bob Konrad of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who led the evaluation team for *Jobs to Careers*.

### **Who Are Frontline Workers in Health Care?**

Frontline health care workers generally have education levels at the Bachelor's level or below, with median annual wages below \$40,000, and they provide direct care or service. As you answer the questions in the organizational readiness tool, consider this partial list of jobs these women and men perform.

Cardiovascular technologists and technicians  
Child, family, and school social workers  
Dental assistants  
Dietetic technicians  
Emergency medical technicians and pharmacists  
Environmental science (e.g., housekeeping)  
Health educators  
Home health aides  
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses  
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians  
Medical and public health social workers  
Medical assistants  
Medical records and health information technicians  
Medical transcriptionists  
Mental health and substance abuse social workers  
Mental health counselors  
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants

Occupational health and safety specialists  
Occupational therapist assistants  
Personal and home care aides  
Pharmacy aides  
Pharmacy technicians  
Physical therapist aides  
Physical therapist assistants  
Psychiatric aides  
Psychiatric technicians  
Recreational therapists  
Radiologic technologists and technicians  
Rehabilitation counselors  
Respiratory therapist technicians  
Social and human services assistants  
Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors  
Surgical technologists

**1. Please list the frontline worker occupations or job titles that you anticipate targeting for work-based learning and/or career pathways initiatives. Respond “TBD” if targets have not been identified.**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

As you answer the following questions, think about the frontline workers you named in question 1.

<b>2. From the point of view of the head of your organization (e.g., president, director), please rate the extent to which the following are a priority for the organization.</b>	<b>Not a Priority</b>	<b>Minor Priority</b>	<b>Major Priority</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Develop an organizational culture that supports the development of learning opportunities at or through work	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area employers	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area educational organizations	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area workforce intermediaries	1	2	3	N/A
Provide frontline workers with opportunities to advance in their careers	1	2	3	N/A
Provide frontline workers with opportunities to increase their wages	1	2	3	N/A
Support frontline workers in maintaining work/life balance	1	2	3	N/A
Improve quality of care through a more educated workforce	1	2	3	N/A
Increase enrollment of frontline workers in educational programs	1	2	3	N/A
Displaced worker training	1	2	3	N/A
Incumbent worker training	1	2	3	N/A
Test innovative educational models, such as providing credit for prior learning	1	2	3	N/A
Economic development within the community	1	2	3	N/A

Expand education and training opportunities for frontline workers	1	2	3	N/A
Expand ability to provide customized education and training programs for local employers	1	2	3	N/A

<b>3. Now consider the priorities for the unit in which you are employed (e.g. department within a university). Are these priorities the same as for the entire organization?</b>	Yes	No
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If **NO**, please rate the extent to which the following are a priority for the unit in which you are employed (e.g., department within a university):

	<b>Not a Priority</b>	<b>Minor Priority</b>	<b>Major Priority</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Develop an organizational culture that supports the development of learning opportunities at or through work	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area employers	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area educational organizations	1	2	3	N/A
Develop partnerships with area workforce intermediaries	1	2	3	N/A
Provide frontline workers with opportunities to advance their careers	1	2	3	N/A
Provide frontline workers with opportunities to increase their wages	1	2	3	N/A
Support frontline workers in maintaining work/life balance	1	2	3	N/A
Improve quality of care through a more educated workforce	1	2	3	N/A
Increase enrollment of frontline workers in educational programs	1	2	3	N/A
Displaced worker training	1	2	3	N/A
Incumbent worker training	1	2	3	N/A

Test innovative educational models, such as providing credit for prior learning	1	2	3	N/A
Economic development within the community	1	2	3	N/A
Expand education and training opportunities for frontline workers	1	2	3	N/A
Expand ability to provide customized education and training programs for local employers	1	2	3	N/A

<b>4. Has your organization participated in any other workforce development initiatives that target frontline health care workers?</b>	Yes	No
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<b>5. Has your organization partnered or collaborated with any of the following types of organizations on frontline workforce development projects?</b>		
Educational institutions	Yes	No
Nonprofit organizations	Yes	No
Government agencies	Yes	No
Workforce Investment Boards	Yes	No
Other employers	Yes	No
Other. Please specify.	Yes	No

<b>6. Does your organization have contracts or agreements to provide services for employers in the community?</b>	Yes	No
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<b>7. Is there a credential that frontline health care workers can work toward for career advancement purposes?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
Please specify (if YES or SOMETIMES): _____			

## Learning Opportunities at and Through Work

<b>8. Does your organization have prior experience delivering education in a work-based learning format?</b>	Yes	No
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<b>9. Are there mechanisms by which credit for prior learning or competency assessment results in credit for frontline workers?</b>	Yes	No
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<b>10. Are courses or other workplace learning opportunities (college, continuing education, or certificate training) offered at an employer site?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
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**If YES:**

Are these learning experiences offered in a way that is convenient for the schedules of frontline workers?	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are active learning experiences promoted over traditional teaching methods (e.g., instructors facilitate knowledge sharing rather than lecture)?	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are instructors enlisted from local educational institutions to deliver learning at the work site?	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are supervisors or other employees recognized as faculty by the educational institution?	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are course learning objectives or competencies inventoried, mapped, or otherwise connected to employer positions?	Yes	Sometimes	No

## Extent of Instructor Involvement in Work-Based Learning

<b>11. Do the instructors work in the same setting as the learners?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>12. Do the instructors have relevant experience to understand the frontline work process?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>13. Did one or more instructors participate in developing the learning objectives?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>14. Do instructors have access to educational materials that can be easily transported to the employer site?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>15. Do instructors have access to all of the necessary clinical practice materials at the employer site?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No

## Extent of Work-Based Learning Opportunities

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
<b>16. Do frontline workers have opportunities to reflect on and learn from critical incidents or work projects (e.g., team meetings to discuss what's going on at work)?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>17. Are situations encountered at work turned into teachable moments for frontline workers?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>18. Do frontline workers have opportunities for on-the-job, peer-to-peer learning?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>19. Does the educational institution conduct any mentor-based training (e.g., a formal process by which a mentor teaches job competencies)?</b>	1	2	3	4

## Availability of Other Supportive Resources

<b>20. Does academic advisement or coaching delivered by the educational partner happen at the workplace?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>21. Are basic skills or remediation offered at the workplace?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No
<b>22. Are college services (e.g. admissions, advising) accessible to frontline workers at the workplace?</b>	Yes	Sometimes	No

## Size and Structure of Organization

**23. Please indicate which of the following best describes your organization.**

- a. Four-year university
- b. Community college
- c. Area health education center
- d. Independent training provider
- e. Workforce intermediary
- f. Workforce Investment Board
- g. Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**24. What is the primary mission of your specific unit or department?**

- a. Continuing education/noncredit
- b. Workforce development
- c. Academic instruction in degree program
- d. Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**25. Approximately how many employees work for your entire organization? \_\_\_\_\_**

**26. Overall, about how many employees work for your specific unit or department? \_\_\_\_\_**

# Jobs to Careers

*Transforming the Front Lines  
of Health Care*

*Jobs to Careers* explores new ways to help frontline health care workers get the skills they need to provide quality care and build a sustainable career. It helps health care providers improve the quality of patient care and health services by building the skills and careers of their frontline employees.

Through *Jobs to Careers*, health care employers build strong partnerships with education institutions and other organizations to change the way frontline employees are trained, rewarded, and advanced. Career paths are developed and made readily available to frontline employees. Employer and education partners make systematic changes that better recognize the needs of working adults and that improve access to and success in skill-building programs.

A hallmark of *Jobs to Careers* is work-based learning: frontline employees master occupational and academic skills in the course of completing their jobs tasks and fulfilling their day-to-day responsibilities. While working full time, frontline employees enter college and earn academic credit for workplace training. Other learning approaches in *Jobs to Careers* include technology-enabled, experience-based, and traditional worksite and off-site learning.

To realize the unique *Jobs to Careers* approach to learning, employers and educators implement systems changes, such as:

- At the workplace: Developing new job positions and responsibilities; deeply involving supervisors in employee training and career development; and offering paid release time, pre-paid tuition assistance, job coaching, and mentoring.

- At the educational institution: Providing college credit for work-based learning, prior learning, and entry-level health care credentials; offering accelerated and part-time degree and certificate programs; contextualizing college preparatory math and English courses to health care concepts and job tasks; and appointing professional staff from health care employers to be adjunct college faculty.

*Jobs to Careers* moves everyone forward to a healthier future. Frontline employees receive rewards for building skills and expanding knowledge necessary for their current jobs and qualifying them to advance to new positions. Employers build and retain talented and committed employees, while bolstering a workplace culture that supports professional development, mentorship, and collaboration across the entire health care team. And health care consumers receive high-quality care and services, delivered by a high-quality workforce.

*Jobs to Careers* is a \$15.8 million initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Hitachi Foundation, with additional support from the U.S. Department of Labor. Jobs for the Future manages the initiative. Seventeen partnerships representing hospitals, community health centers, long-term care, and behavioral health received multiyear *Jobs to Careers* grants.

For more information on *Jobs to Careers*:

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