

## Career Clusters 101 –Talking Points

### Slide 1:

- This webinar will provide a brief overview on the Career Clusters framework, including their history, organization, and evolution over time

### Slide 2:

- Career Clusters are a framework for Career Technical Education
- At the most basic level, they are grouping of industries and occupations – which are then used at the sec/postsecondary level to organize CTE curriculum
- They can also serve as a framework for career counseling and guidance
- And provide an avenue to connect business and industry expectations and priorities to CTE instruction

### Slide 3:

- The US Department of Education first developed the concept of Career Clusters with education topics as the organizing principle
- During the 1994 School to Work Act, Career Clusters revisited and reorganized around industry sectors
- The Building Linkages project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1996, led to the 16 career clusters

### Slide 4:

- 2002: movement led by states to develop a set of supportive tools and resources around the CC
- Around this time, the effort moved to the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium out of the U.S. Department of Education – and became OWNED by the states
- Led to development of Knowledge & Skills Statements to support teaching/learning of those industry-led expectations
- Revised in 2008 and again in 2012, where they became part of the process to develop the CCTC

### Slide 5:

- A few key definitions:
  - Career Clusters are expectations set at the industry sector and are therefore quite broad
  - Within each of the Career Clusters are “Career Pathways,” which go deeper and focus on the knowledge and skills critical for specialized fields within each Cluster
  - A program of study is the actual sequence of academic/technical courses and experiences that prepare students for the career of their choice. POS should include both secondary and postsecondary courses

### Slide 6:

- Here are the 16 Career Clusters, covering the full range of the world of work

### Slide 7:

- Here is an example of a set of pathways under the Ag, Food, Nat Resources Cluster that demonstrate how unique and focused pathways can be– although importantly they are not focused on a particular JOB but rather a field or specialty within the industry Career Cluster.

Slide 8:

- The NCTEF (501c3) manages the Career Clusters and supports NASDCTEC
- Also informed – and validated by – National Advisory Committees representing key stakeholders in CTE

Slide 9:

- Why Career Clusters?
- First of all, vehicle of education reform – provides organizing framework that policymakers, administrators, and classroom teachers can all coalesce around when addressing students' career readiness
- Help bring secondary and postsecondary together in developing clear course pathways and programs of study
- Can serve as a tool for educators and career counselors to work together to support students' career goals
- Also, supported by Carl D. Perkins – the fed legislation that supports CTE at the state and local level
- Finally, available and free to all states. Provides a common framework for CTE across nation

Slide 10:

- (Read slide as is)
- In other words: Career Clusters are a powerful tool to organize instruction and career development. Learners start with a broad base of interest as well as knowledge and skills and progress to a more focused area of study.

Slide 11: So what DON'T the Career Clusters Do:

- Don't add another thing or take away from current programs:
  - Rather, Career Clusters provide a framework that can be used to strengthen and enhance existing programs – including the processes for developing or selecting courses.
- Don't take away occupation areas and don't track learners into a single job:
  - Rather the goal of Career Clusters is to help prepare learners for careers, NOT just a single entry level job.
- Importantly, they DON'T lock students into a rigid path. (For one thing, they are broad. Emphasize skills common to an entire cluster – individuals can move horizontally, vertically, etc.)
  - Their design encourages career exploration within and across clusters

Slide 12

- For more information about Career Clusters and the related resources and tools available to support the implementation of them, see [www.careertech.org](http://www.careertech.org)