

# Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group Counselor Skills and Competencies Recommendations February 2019

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## WHAT THIS REPORT REPRESENTS

This document concludes the first stage of work for the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance (CWFA) and the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group. It describes a learning and design process that a collaborative group of university partners, district leaders, and funders completed in Fall 2018 to identify and articulate a set of competences and skills for effective school counselors who prepare students for success along multiple post-secondary pathways.

It is put forth as a starting point for conversation with a wide network of stakeholders about next steps.

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## WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS WORK?

Numerous organizations and individuals were instrumental in providing guidance and input into this project, from providing information about current practices, to sharing insight on what makes counselors most successful in helping students navigate multiple post-secondary pathways, to collaboratively crafting and revising the language in this report. The CWFA and the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group is appreciative of their perspectives and contribution to this project.

### **Working group members represent the following organizations:**

|                                       |                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance | National Louis University |
| Chicago Public Schools (CPS)          | High School District 113  |
| DePaul University                     | High School District 214  |
| Governors State University            |                           |

### **Other experts consulted from the following organizations:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Academy for College Admission Counselling | Network for College Success            |
| Academy for Urban School Leadership       | Illinois Student Assistance Commission |
| Chicago Jobs Council                      | Youth Guidance                         |
| Education Systems Center                  |  |

### **We also referenced the following industry resources for benchmarking:**

- Alliance for Quality Career Pathways
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- Chicago Public Schools College and Career Advising Credential
- Danielson Framework for Teaching
- Illinois PaCE Framework
- Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA)
- National Association for College Admission Counseling

## WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

The Pro Path Fund was established in 2016-2017 in an effort to change the “college for all” mindset, replacing it with the vision of a well-connected and transparent college and career pathway system with multiple entry points and multiple exit points for all. The Pro Path Fund and associated Pro Path Initiative is embedded within the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance (CWFA), a funder collaborative hosted at the Chicago Community Trust. Pro Path’s vision draws from and aligns with the framework established by the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, a project of CLASP<sup>1</sup>.

In early 2018, CWFA convened a collaborative group of stakeholders including school counselor leaders from Chicago Public Schools, High School Districts 214 and 113, and area universities that prepare school counselors (collectively referred to moving forward as the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group) to explore how universities and school districts might work more closely together to improve long term outcomes for young people. Inspired by the partnership between Chicago Public Schools and the university community to improve 8<sup>th</sup> grade student algebra outcomes, the Post-Secondary Counseling Work Group wanted to explore how school districts and universities could work better together to increase young adult success along multiple post-secondary pathways.

The group identified several underlying assumptions in their respective work:

- Quality counseling in schools is one of the greatest drivers of postsecondary success for young adults, whether students are pursuing a traditional college pathway or taking the Progressive Pathways approach;
- School counselors are most often the adults who are serving that role in schools; and
- Districts are seeking ways to increase the capacity of their counselors to deliver quality college and career advising.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) asserts that effective school counselors must be proficient across three domains in service of students: academic, career, and social-emotional development<sup>2</sup>. The members of the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group identified that while school counselor graduate coursework that leads to licensure covers all three domains (the professional focus areas of counseling work), they had anecdotal evidence that counselors were arriving on the job without adequate knowledge and skills in post-secondary planning, which is in the “career domain”. Some districts represented on the working group had developed embedded professional development programs to help new and seasoned counselors build their base of knowledge and skills in this area (e.g. Chicago Public Schools College and Career Advising Credential, or CCCAC, which is a CPS-designed and led professional learning course sequence and credential for counselors), while others acknowledged encouraging or requiring their new counselors to seek additional training in this area through third party professional development partners.

While this approach was meeting the needs of each individual district, the members of the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group wondered whether the knowledge and skills that counselors were seeking through these post-licensure options could instead be introduced, mastered, and measured earlier in a counselor’s training- specifically, during their graduate program. Locally, at the university level, counseling students are provided opportunities to develop college and career advising competencies via coursework and practica/internships. However, these opportunities vary depending on the university, and there is no mechanism for university partners to assess how the skills developed via these opportunities align with the needs of the secondary education community.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.clasp.org/alliance-quality-career-pathways>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/asca-national-model/foundation>

During several meetings in Spring 2018, the group discussed various formats this effort might take – from additional required coursework, to a passing grade on a specific standardized assessment, to a standards-based portfolio. Regardless of the format, the group was intrigued by the potential to design a way for counselors to develop and demonstrate proficiency in post-secondary counseling practices *before* seeking employment as a school counselor, making them more competitive in the marketplace, while also providing school districts with an indicator of baseline counselor proficiency in post-secondary counseling practices to allow for more focused, district-specific professional development training for counselors once hired.

In Summer 2018, the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group published an RFQ seeking a partner to help them identify and articulate core competencies of effective post-secondary counselors and begin to determine ways to assess mastery of these competencies. The group partnered with InStride Advisors to lead the first part of the work during Fall 2018, with the engagement producing two primary deliverables:

1. Polished language describing a **set of skills and competencies** that the key stakeholders involved agree are essential for school counselors to demonstrate to effectively help students move from high school to a post-secondary career or school option, along with a catalogue of how and when these skills and competencies are currently introduced and mastered along the professional continuum for school counselors.
2. **Recommended next steps** that each stakeholder group (and individual entities within each group) might consider, including how adjustments could be made to current pre-service preparation programs at the university level, and in-service training at the district level, to align program components to the set of skills and competencies created as part of the engagement.

This report includes the content for both of these deliverables and is intended as a starting point for discussions with the broader secondary and post-secondary communities about how to assess counselor proficiency in these areas, how universities and districts might be supported to further embed the concepts included here, and how to measure impact on student success as a result.




## HOW WE BUILT OUR POINT OF VIEW

We wanted to make sure that we built a comprehensive base of knowledge about how school counselors are currently prepared and supported to effectively help young people navigate post-secondary options and create and follow a plan for a successful future. InStride Advisors conducted a series of interviews with members of the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group, as well as local thought leaders to understand current strengths and gaps in practice and policy at the district and university level. InStride also completed a review of documents and literature from industry organizations, such as the American School Counselor Association<sup>3</sup> (ASCA) and the National Association for College Admission Counseling<sup>4</sup> (NACAC), as well as state-level initiatives such as the Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness Act, and the resulting Post-Secondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) framework<sup>5</sup> to assess where post-secondary counseling skills and competencies were described in the professional landscape. While the PaCE framework<sup>6</sup> details what students should know and be supported to do, allowing them to make decisions about career and post-secondary (PS) education or training, to plan a course of study, and to make financial aid assessments with family members, it does not provide a complementary set of competencies and skills that counselors must have to be able to effectively utilize the PaCE framework.

In Fall 2018, the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group met three times to review findings, as well as develop consensus on language that members believe describe the competencies, skills, knowledge, habits, practices, mindsets, and beliefs that effective post-secondary counselors must have. The group met once more in January 2019 to identify opportunities to integrate these components into existing graduate coursework and program requirements, as well as job-embedded professional development. The content in the following sections summarizes the language that the Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group is recommending, as well as recommended next steps.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

The working group believes that existing professional standards for counselors are important, but not sufficiently detailed, in understanding good post-secondary counseling practice when we see it. In addition, newly developed resources like the PaCE framework have started to bring clarity about what *students* should know and be supported to do as they navigate the post-secondary journey, but that more can and should be done to provide *school counselors* with more clarity about their role in effectively counseling students along the way. To understand how the most effective school counselors prepare students for post-secondary success, we need to examine not only core competencies, but also what counselors know (“knowledge and skills”), what they do (“habits and practices”) and what they believe (“beliefs and mindsets”). These elements are aligned, but different – and they are focused on specific practice than a more generalized set of professional standards.

| What do we mean by “competency”?  |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>Beliefs and Mindsets</b> – what school counselors believe and embody from the outset and over time to be effective in their role.   |
|  | <b>Knowledge and Skills</b> – what school counselors should know and be able to do, as well as the resources they should have access to, in order to be effective in their role.             |
|  | <b>Habits and Practices</b> – the activities that school counselors should regularly practice when most effective in their role, given their preparation and access to knowledge and skills. |

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/asca-national-model>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nacacnet.org/advocacy--ethics/NACAC-Code-of-Ethics/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.advanceillinois.org/pwr/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.isbe.net/documents/pace\\_revisions.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/documents/pace_revisions.pdf)

We believe that all of these elements are observable, measurable, and should be assessed regularly as part of the professional development path for school counselors. Competency-based practices require a complementary assessment tool that reflects the developmental nature of this work. For example, a pre-service counseling intern will be at a different place on the developmental continuum than a more experienced school counselor might be.

We have made an explicit decision to use the term “multiple post-secondary pathways” throughout this document. We believe that there is no one “right” path for students to take, and that the notion of a four-year college being the “traditional” or even “optimal” path for every student is outdated. We use the term “**multiple post-secondary pathways**” broadly, inclusively, and intentionally, describing a range of options that students might pursue, including 2- and 4-year college, military service, technical training/apprenticeships, gap/service year, job programs, or direct entry into the workforce with a living wage. We use the term “post-secondary domain” as an equivalent of the ASCA “career domain” term for the rest of this document.

The Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group believes that – when effective in the post-secondary domain - schools counselors exhibit the following competencies:

| School counselors are...       | Which is apparent when they...   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Developmentally focused</b> | Embed principles of human development (particularly adolescent and young adult development) into postsecondary counseling practice.                |
| <b>Culturally responsive</b>   | Engage with and respond to students, families, colleagues, and the community in meaningful, respectful, and culturally responsive ways.            |
| <b>Actively informed</b>       | Help students identify one or more target post-secondary options and take progressive steps to advance their learning and post-secondary planning. |
| <b>Ethically driven</b>        | Demonstrate ethical and professional counselor behavior that is focused on student ownership and decision making.                                  |
| <b>Systemically engaged</b>    | Promote and influence an organizational culture that respects, supports, and delivers comprehensive post-secondary readiness for all students.     |

The following pages detail the elements of each of these competencies.

When effective in the post-secondary domain, school counselors are **developmentally focused**. They embed principles of human development (particularly adolescent and young adult development) into postsecondary counseling practice.



**Beliefs and Mindsets** – *School counselors believe...*

- Counseling is based on human elements of trust and empathy.
- Counseling is collaborative, participatory, and student-directed.
- Students are on a developmental continuum throughout their K-12 experience and should be academically prepared to access any post-secondary pathway.
- Young adults are capable of making informed decisions about what’s best for their future.\*
- Best practice post-secondary counseling is non-judgmental, with adult biases monitored and managed.



**Knowledge and Skills** – *School counselors know how to...*

- Promote self-awareness in students, helping them identify their own strengths, skills, goals, and values, in order to explore their relevance to a variety of post-secondary options.
- Draw out, honor, and reflect student voice in post-secondary planning and decision making, and facilitate student thinking about their own skills, interests, and values.
- Use and disaggregate longitudinal student outcome data across college, career, and workforce to inform student-led decisions.



**Habits and Practices** – *School counselors regularly...*

- Encourage students to be reflective about their own strengths, skills, values, and goals, and help them identify careers and/or schools that might be a match and fit.
- Respect and encourage student-led decision making in the post-secondary planning process.
- Post-secondary planning incorporates the whole student - social/emotional, academic, family, community context, and workplace and career awareness.

**We might see this competency in practice when...**

A school counselor administers career and strength assessments to gain knowledge of student interest.

A school counselor utilizes a tool like Naviance to assign and monitor the completion of developmentally appropriate tasks to students based on grade level and planning stage.

A school counselor accesses a resource such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook<sup>7</sup> to increase students’ understanding of career pathways.

\* Post-secondary champion values, as articulated by Chicago Public Schools through the CCCAC.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

When effective in the post-secondary domain, school counselors are **culturally responsive**. They engage with and respond to students, families, colleagues, and the community in meaningful, respectful, and culturally responsive ways.



**Beliefs and Mindsets** – *School counselors believe...*

- Parents and families are important stakeholders in post-secondary decision making.
- Students’ and families’ values, beliefs, socio-economic status, and cultural background, and student’s sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, should not influence the quality and quantity of post-secondary counseling support that students receive.
- All students have the right to make the best decisions for themselves; there is no “default” post-secondary option for any student.



**Knowledge and Skills** – *School counselors know how to...*

- Identify gaps in multiple post-secondary pathway outcomes for different populations, and actively work to overcome implications of historical bias in post-secondary counseling.
- Assess and evaluate student academic and social and emotional readiness for and interest in multiple post-secondary pathways.
- Recognize barriers that students may face (e.g. personal, financial, legal) in pursuing various post-secondary options, and co-develop strategies to overcome these challenges.



**Habits and Practices** – *School counselors regularly...*

- Participate in regular reflection and self-assessments to monitor their own bias and influence.
- Avoid imposing personal values rooted in counselor's own religion, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and political beliefs.
- Conduct needs assessments and interest inventories with students and use the results to co-create personalized post-secondary plans with each student.
- Seek and participate in regular professional development opportunities and consultation to build a more culturally responsive counseling practice.

| We might see this competency in practice when...   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| A school counselor conducts a “deep dive” data audit and identifies meaningful variations of post-secondary readiness or success indicators for specific student sub-groups. | A school counselor regularly meets with a mentor or their professional support system to reflect on their practice, and how their own biases may impact their work with students. | A school counselor consults with their district’s equity director and co-designs a professional learning session for school faculty to learn about improving equitable access to post-secondary options. |



When effective in the post-secondary domain, school counselors are **actively informed**. They help students identify one or more target post-secondary options & take progressive steps to advance their learning and post-secondary planning.



**Beliefs and Mindsets** – *School counselors believe...*

- Students should build self-sufficiency to handle future decision making, with support from adults.
- Students should have multiple post-secondary options that fit with their strengths, skills, values, and life goals.
- Every student should graduate from high school and be prepared for employment, college, or other post-secondary education.
- There is a range of acceptable and appropriate post-secondary options for each student.



**Knowledge and Skills** – *School counselors know how to...*

- Help students articulate, build, persist, and succeed with their individual post-secondary plan.
- Articulate a locally applicable framework that outlines what students should know about multiple post-secondary pathways each year.
- Maintain current and relevant knowledge about multiple post-secondary pathway options, and awareness of credible sources of that information.
- Access and utilize clearinghouse and other longitudinal workforce data to evaluate how students might fare across various post-secondary options.



**Habits and Practices** – *School counselors regularly...*

- Develop and offer tools to help students navigate choices and understand and prepare for inevitable challenges or barriers.
- Present and discuss multiple post-secondary options with students, inclusive of college and non-college paths, with consideration of students' return on investment for each option.
- Explore and maintain active membership and participation in local, state, regional, and/or national professional organizations and development groups.
- Evaluate longitudinal outcome data trends across various post-secondary options.

**We might see this competency in practice when...**

A school counselor attends a professional development training by college admissions representatives and develops student-facing materials to share during classroom visits.

A school counselor actively participates and contributes to a school, network, or district-level professional learning team session about career pathways.

A school counselor convenes or participates in an advisory group of community and business leaders to build their own knowledge about workforce trends and career pathways.

When effective in the post-secondary domain, school counselors are **ethically driven**. They demonstrate ethical and professional counselor behavior that is focused on student ownership and decision making.



**Beliefs and Mindsets** – *School counselors believe...*

- A counselor's role is to empower students to make decisions and take action for themselves, without inserting their own bias.
- Post-secondary planning is relevant and necessary for all students.
- “Post-secondary” is a broad term that covers a range of acceptable options.
- Student decision making is only one of several indicators of authentic student ownership.



**Knowledge and Skills** – *School counselors know how to...*

- Connect student interests with a variety of post-secondary options, without inserting their own bias.
- Organize relevant materials and have resources available and accessible to all students for career and college exploration.
- Learn about the skills, interests, and motivations for all students, allowing this data to drive post-secondary exploration.
- Keep key stakeholder groups for all students informed and involved in student progress.



**Habits and Practices** – *School counselors regularly...*

- Use post-secondary pathway application steps as opportunities to engage with students in meaningful and authentic ways (e.g. completing a FAFSA).
- Monitor student progression along the post-secondary continuum, either through automation (E.g. Naviance) or through relationship-based tracking, and actively seek to keep students on track along the way.
- Identify and help students evaluate a comprehensive set of options reflecting the whole student.
- Strive to inform student decision making with limited influence from their own biases.

**We might see this competency in practice when...**

A school counselor makes students aware of the differences between for-profit and non-profit post-secondary providers.

Students are able to describe why they are completing a FAFSA form, with a well-articulated understanding of deadlines.

Students are able to articulate the details of their own post-secondary plans.

When effective in the post-secondary domain, school counselors are **systemically engaged**. They promote and influence an organizational culture that respects, supports, and delivers comprehensive post-secondary readiness for all students.



**Beliefs and Mindsets** – *School counselors believe...*

- Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving students in a lead role, along with school counselors, parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders and other stakeholders.
- School policies and practices must reflect a sincere belief among all staff that all students can be successful.
- Counselors play a vital leadership role in a school, facilitating personalized and culturally appropriate student explorations of postsecondary possibilities\*, and driving organizational change at the school level.
- School counselors are the primary post-secondary champions in their schools.



**Knowledge and Skills** – *School counselors know how to...*

- Integrate local and state priorities around post-secondary options for students across content areas (e.g. the growing movement for students to have a postsecondary plan as a graduation requirement).
- Assess and understand the cultural biases that exist within a school building around multiple post-secondary pathways and actively manage their impact.
- Facilitate adult learning and reflection around effective school-wide post-secondary planning work for students, including with colleagues, families, and community stakeholders.



**Habits and Practices** – *School counselors regularly...*

- Collaborate with administration, teachers, staff and decision-makers to create a culture of postsecondary readiness.
- Measure and report on institutional progress toward a comprehensive and responsive post-secondary culture.
- Leverage resources and relationships within the school and community to incorporate a variety of post-secondary options in counseling work.

**We might see this competency in practice when...**

A school counselor participates in a district post-secondary committee or workshop, and actively informs the content of related trainings for other staff.

A school counselor writes a “flashlight report” to highlight specific data about student post-secondary outcomes and shares it with administrators to advocate for new programs or priorities.

A school counselor volunteers at the Illinois School Assistance Commission (ISAC) conference and presents a poster session or breakout session about their graduate program capstone project on post-secondary readiness.

\* Post-secondary champion values, as articulated by Chicago Public Schools through the CCCAC.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group puts forth four recommendations for consideration by the larger post-secondary readiness community.

**Recommendation #1: Develop a formal competency-based assessment tool** which would allow graduate school programs, as well as school districts and local and state boards of education, to evaluate and recognize counselor mastery of core competencies, knowledge and skills, habits and practices, and beliefs and mindsets.

Similar to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), a competency-based assessment process would allow counselors who work in the post-secondary counseling field, or those who are preparing to do so, to demonstrate their mastery of competencies that matter to student success. Like the five core propositions for the NBPTS<sup>8</sup>, the set of competencies outlined in this document, and the additional elements developed for each one, represent what we believe effective counselors should know and be able to do.

The Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group recommends that local universities take the lead on designing an assessment that can be administered digitally.

**Recommendation #2: Leverage the practicum and internship requirements of counselor education and licensure programs to teach and assess post-secondary counseling skills and competencies.**

Practicum and internship elements provide a natural convergence of university and district attention and priorities. Universities seek internship placements for pre-service counselors that provide them with learning opportunities that will prepare them for a successful career. And districts hope to utilize counseling interns to better serve their students' needs. In many cases, schools are already using counseling interns in post-secondary counseling work, although this is not a standardized practice. Making post-secondary counseling work a more intentional part of practicum and internship placements would serve all stakeholders well: students, counselors, districts, and universities. If pre-service counselors know the competencies, knowledge, skills, habits, practices, mindsets, and beliefs for effective post-secondary counseling, they can more proactively seek to practice them, and find them modeled, within their internship placements.

For example, High School District 214 and National Louis University are working to design a pilot internship model which would require school counseling interns to teach a post-secondary readiness class for high school juniors. The Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group challenges other districts and universities to identify opportunities to better focus the internship semester on post-secondary counseling competencies.

**Recommendation #3: Where district-embedded professional development coursework exists, consider developing a track for pre-service counselors that can be taught by practicing counselors and/or university faculty in the semester before the internship.**

Chicago Public Schools' CCCAC curriculum has garnered interest from local universities that prepare school counselors. While the current CCCAC is intended for current CPS counselors, there may be benefit in creating a fee-for-service option for pre-service counselors who are interested in working at the high school level. This could be done in the Chicago area initially, but also adopted by districts and university partners across the state.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>

Similarly, expand “pathways for professional learning” to provide university credit for job-embedded professional learning experiences where school counselors are building skills and knowledge in post-secondary counseling practices, giving them transferrable credit, should they choose to pursue additional graduate coursework, or apply their graduate credit for salary increases, where applicable.

**Recommendation #4: Explore and reward exemplary mastery of the school counselor skills and competencies that are necessary to support post-secondary student success.**

We believe that intentional collaboration between and among universities, districts, and professional associations to prepare counselors to effectively help students navigate multiple post-secondary pathways can be incentivized and rewarded, thereby encouraging others to take notice and replicate great ideas. For example, the PaCE framework concept is being rolled out to districts across the state with support and leadership from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)<sup>9</sup> to help districts establish post-secondary planning practices for students; however, the counselor’s role in that work, and their collective skill and knowledge to do it well, deserves special attention. We believe we should also acknowledge when and where there is alignment between universities and districts, as well as professional associations, on how to best prepare and support counselors to do this work well.

We value that post-secondary student outcomes are captured and valued in the Illinois School Report Cards and in the CPS School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) and want to explore whether counselor readiness and/or certification to support these outcomes might also be included in the school profile.

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The Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group looks forward to engaging a broader set of stakeholders in designing next steps and selecting the highest leverage opportunities for us to work collectively to address.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.isac.org/pace/>

## **ABOUT THE CHICAGOLAND WORKFORCE FUNDER ALLIANCE (CWFA)**

CWFA is a funder collaborative hosted at The Chicago Community Trust, working with employers and other workforce stakeholders to increase employment, earnings and racial equity for underprepared workers in the Chicago region. The Funder Alliance has identified the following goals and objectives in its approach to pursuing this mission:

### *Goal 1: Increase Employer Investment in the Development of their Current and Future Workforce*

- Objective 1: Increase employer involvement and investment in work-based learning.
- Objective 2: Increase employer investment in incumbent worker training.

### *Goal 2: Increase the Effectiveness of the Workforce Development System.*

- Objective 1: Increase the use of shared data systems and alignment around metrics.
- Objective 2: Increase systems alignment around career pathways.
- Objective 3: Increase employer hiring from the workforce system.

### *Goal 3: Increase Access to Quality Jobs.*

- Objective 1: Reduce the incidence of wage theft.
- Objective 2: Increase the Number of Pioneer Employers.
- Objective 3: Reduce discrimination barriers to entry-level jobs.

To advance these objectives, the Funder Alliance blends the tools of grant making and civic leadership into strategies and projects. CWFA is led by a group of pooled funders who agree to jointly support the resulting initiatives. One of these projects is the Pro Path Initiative, which addresses all three of the objectives in Goal 2 above.

## **ABOUT THE PRO PATH INITIATIVE**

Through the Pro Path Initiative, CWFA has come together with a number of education funders to advance a shared interest in promoting the development of a Chicagoland education and workforce system that includes a seamless transition for students from secondary to post-secondary programs. The Pro Path Fund was established within the Funder Alliance with the aim of improving that seamless transition by expanding the universe of transparent and accessible *Progressive Pathways to Post-Secondary Success*. Progressive Pathways allow individuals to alternate between and combine periods of education/training and employment, and thereby progressively build toward college and career success over an extended period of time.

## **ABOUT INSTRIDE ADVISORS**

InStride Advisors is a boutique consultancy based in the Chicago area serving schools, non-profit organizations, foundations, and collaboratives of similar organizations. InStride provides key support to organizations looking to address challenges, grow strategically, engage their teams, and manage change, with specific focus on partnering with and preparing organizational leaders to navigate change structurally, operationally, and culturally. Areas of expertise include strategy development, talent management design, stakeholder engagement, transition management, strategic communications, and leadership coaching.