



State Policy Toolkit: Success

This is the fifth and final installment in the National College Access Network's State Policy Toolkit. The toolkit reflects NCAN's [Model State Policy Agenda](#), which aims to provide NCAN members and partners, particularly those in networks or coalitions, with resources to advance their state policy agenda. Moreover, the toolkit provides examples of effective policies and programs to help organizations develop and guide their state policy advocacy strategy. Each installment topic is derived from NCAN's model agenda and is categorized under either **affordability** or **talent development**. Subcategories for affordability include *need-based aid* and *funding strategies*. Beneath talent development are *preparation*, *access*, and *success*.

Success — NCAN's stance: States should support students to and through the higher education experience. States should: (1) provide multiple pathways to success including two- and four-year degrees, certificates, and apprenticeships; and (2) create and then manage a clear and accessible public database of transfer pathways among public institutions.

Provide multiple pathways to success including two- and four-year degrees, certificates, and apprenticeships.

States should invest in all forms of higher education that lead to upward mobility. Investments in short-term programs should be geared toward modern industries that provide clear opportunity for students to progress socioeconomically. Ultimately, states should bolster two-year, four-year, and certificate programs that lead to well-paying jobs for students.

- Chapter eight of a [2010 report](#) from the California Department of Education to the state's legislature and governor highlights the means by which California is providing high school students with multiple pathways to higher education. The report cites applicable research, identifies efforts already underway on this front, and acknowledges the challenges California faced in these undertakings.
- In May 2016, Iowa put forth a comprehensive effort to restructure its public investment in short-term postsecondary options. [House File 2392](#) revised standards to achieve a more modern career and technical education (CTE) curriculum, invested in a new planning partnership program between K-12 and two-year schools, and updated the Board for Career and Technical Education to reflect these new items.
- In January 2015, the [New York Board of Regents](#) approved [regulations](#) expanding the variety of coursework that counts as credits for graduation. High school students in New York must pass Regents Exams to graduate, and under new regulations that allow for multiple pathways, students can choose from a variety of work-based learning programs to study and later be tested on, such as foreign languages, a form of CTE, and the arts. Rigorous coursework and exams in these areas allow students to study an area of interest to them, prepare for a specific and sought-out postsecondary option, and begin their higher education experience having already obtained college credits or a certificate.

Create and then manage a clear and accessible public database of transfer pathways among public institutions (e.g., establish pathway programs to guide students from two-year colleges through to four-year degrees).

It is crucial for policymakers to have a comprehensive understanding of student pathways, particularly concerning transfer students, in order to identify where and why students do not complete higher education. For students themselves, support such as that provided in a [guided pathways model](#) can be extremely helpful in devising a completion plan with actionable goals and checkpoints along the way.



- In May 2014, the Education Commission of the States [profiled](#) each state's transfer and articulation policies, identifying individual state resources and statutes that ease the transfer process for students.
 - The Alabama Commission on Higher Education developed a [web portal](#) that provides relevant information for transferring and articulation, identifies courses that transfer universally across Alabama, and more.
- In June 2015, Columbia University's Community College Resource Center (CCRC) began developing a "[practitioner packet](#)" around the concept of guided pathways. This resource provides an elaborate illustration of this reform model and the data to support it, a case study of a campus that adopted the model, and recommendations for the adoption process on a new campus.
- Announced in December 2016, the [California Guided Pathways Project](#) is a program in which 20 community colleges were competitively selected to receive funding to implement a guided pathways program on their campus. With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, College Futures Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and The Teagle Foundation, each campus is currently developing program maps for their students in an effort to increase completion and persistence rates on campus. Programs are set to be fully in place by 2019.