

# Southeast Arkansas College



Career Pathways Student Handbook  
2016 Edition

**Career Pathways:**

The Career Pathways Initiative is a comprehensive program designed to improve the earnings and postsecondary-education attainments of low-income or TANF-eligible parents. The initiative provides funding for two-year/technical colleges to develop pathway programs that assist participants to earn a marketable, education credential for immediate entry into a high-demand, high-wage occupation. The Career Pathways Initiative emphasizes such program components as job-readiness skills, basic academic preparation/remediation, and postsecondary credentials tied to targeted jobs.

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a federal program that receives its funding through a block grant from the Department of Workforce Services (DWS). CPI began in Arkansas in 2005. It is administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. Currently, there are twenty-five Career Pathways Initiatives in the state, one at every two-year/technical college.

**Career Pathways Mission:**

The mission of the Career Pathways Initiative at Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College is to assist eligible adults in meeting educational and employment-training goals in order to acquire and maintain a self-sustaining job. CPI provides intensive student services that can include tutoring, book loans, transportation assistance, childcare assistance, tuition and/or testing fee assistance.

**Expectations of Career Pathways Participants:**

- Use this program to gain education and skills
- Find a career pathway for a job and ultimately a career
- Set educational and personal goals
- Take advantage of the support services that will help lead to success, which may include the personal and professional arenas
- Have good attendance and attitude
- Meet with/contact CPI staff on a regular basis (at least once a month) and as requested
- Success is the student's responsibility; the CPI staff is here to offer assistance as needed
- Keep Career Pathways informed of your employment status for one year after graduation and take advantage of CPI support services such as résumé building, job-readiness training, and employment searches as necessary

**Students accepted for the Career Pathways Program must meet the following criteria:**

- Be an Arkansas resident
- Have custody of a dependent child or dependent children (under 21 years old)
- Be a current TEA client **or** receive SNAP, Medicaid, or ARKids **or** have a family income at or below 250% of the federal poverty guideline.

**Income Levels at 250 % of the Federal Poverty Level**

Persons in Family Unit	Monthly	Annual Income
2	\$3,338.00	\$40,050.00
3	\$4,200.00	\$50,400.00
4	\$5,063.00	\$60,750.00
5	\$5,925.00	\$71,100.00
6	\$6,788.00	\$81,450.00
7	\$7,652.00	\$91,825.00
8	\$8,519.00	\$102,225.00

***Students must provide documentation in order to be eligible for the program.***

**Documentation (includes all of the following):**

- Copy of Federal Income Tax Return each year while in the program (tax filers only)
- Driver's license or photo ID
- Social Security Card
- Proof from DHS showing receipt of SNAP, TEA, Medicaid, and/or ARKids each year while in the program
- Award or denial letter regarding Pell status from SEARK College's Financial Aid Office each semester while in the program
- All previous college transcripts or high school transcript/GED (once) and a current transcript each semester while in the program
- Placement test scores (ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, ACT, or TABE)
- Proposed schedule or official registration form
- Book list from Barnes & Noble Bookstore link on the SEARK College website, [www.seark.edu](http://www.seark.edu) (only for students wishing to borrow books)
- Career Pathways Questionnaire and Intake Form

**Child Documentation (may include one or more of the following):**

- Social Security Card
- Copy of Birth Certificate or proof of birth showing date of birth and parent's name
- Adoption papers
- Court-ordered documents

**Enrollment:**

Applications and eligibility documents must be submitted to the Career Pathways Office at SEARK College. Students are taken based on grant priorities and needs as well as documentation compliance. When funding and enrollment limits have been maximized, students will be placed on a waiting list and may be enrolled at a later date based on funding availability.

Career Pathways Office of SEARK College will no longer be able to provide assistance to students who have already earned a degree. (Note: "Assistance" includes tuition, childcare, gas, books, and testing fees. The term "degree" refers to associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and higher.) This change is due to a significant reduction in the overall operating budget.

**Denial into Pathways Program:**

The Pathways staff reserves the right to deny admission to the program, even if the student meets the initial criteria for admission. Reasons for possible denial may include but are not limited to:

- Student has defaulted on a federal student loan or owes a balance to a college/ university
- Student has a history of poor academic performance or does not attend class regularly
- Alteration or falsification of documents
- Student is disrespectful and/or abusive towards staff or other students
- Student does not provide information and documents to the Career Pathways staff in a timely manner
- Student has been noncompliant with CPI Program requirements or has a past history of noncompliance
- Student has already earned an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or higher

- Student is not an active job-seeker
- Student is not degree/certificate-seeking at SEARK College
- Student is only pursuing a degree/certificate in General Studies, which does not lead directly to employment

**Probation/Suspension:**

Students not complying with the provisions of the CPI Student Handbook and/or any other agreement, including transportation and childcare, will be placed on probation that semester or for the remainder of the enrolled semesters. Services may be discontinued at the Director's and/or Counselor's discretion based on the area(s) of noncompliance.

**Students will sign a Probation Notice to inform them of:**

- Their status, area(s) of noncompliance, and corrective action(s) required.
- Excessive noncompliance may result in immediate suspension.

Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) and attend classes on a regular basis each semester in order to receive assistance. Students who receive less than a 2.0 GPA or have poor class attendance may be placed on suspension. Students who have less than a 2.0 for the semester but have a cumulative GPA above 2.0 will be required to meet with the CPI Counselor to determine if they will be allowed a probationary semester. A probationary semester will only be allowed if the Counselor, Director, and instructors feel that the student will be able to meet all standards the following semester.

Career Pathways cannot pay tuition for any class more than once. Students who are in the CPI Program and withdraw will be placed on suspension. Additionally, students who receive CPI tuition assistance and withdraw, drop out, or do not successfully complete coursework will be responsible for paying for an equal number of credit hours at their own expense before they can be reconsidered for future Career Pathways services. Students who wish to be readmitted to the program must meet with the CPI Director to determine eligibility.

***Alteration and/or falsification of documents will result in immediate suspension.***

**Mandatory Meetings:**

Career Pathways Orientation is required for Pathways students each semester. Current CPI students may choose to participate in person or online. However, students who take the online orientation must call to schedule their individual one-on-one appointments by the last day of in-person orientation.

**Workshops:**

Students may be required to attend scheduled workshops.

**Change of Information:**

It is very important for the CPI staff to have current and correct student contact information. Students who change mailing addresses, telephone numbers, or e-mail addresses need to contact the Pathways staff as soon as possible so that necessary corrections can be made in the database.

**Career Pathways Database:**

Students who receive benefits or services from Career Pathways will be entered into the Career Pathways database. Approximately every six months, students who have become inactive in the program or who have not had any contact with the Career Pathways Office will be withdrawn. Students may be re-entered into the database if they once again become active participants in Career Pathways. Typically, students may not be entered or withdrawn from the database more than two times. However, the Career Pathways Director has the ability to re-enroll a student who has been withdrawn from the database twice if she feels that circumstances exist to warrant such an action.

**Academic Advising:**

Participants are required to meet with their appointed SEARK College Academic Advisor before enrolling each semester. The Pathways Counselor will review each individual student's schedule and discuss degree plan options based on the schedule set by the advisor and the student. Students are invited to make an appointment with the Pathways Counselor to discuss any academic difficulty and graduation plans.

**Career Pathway Initiative Services:**

***Please be aware that Career Pathways is an assistance program and may not be able to fund every educational need for every student. Funding is limited and services are not***

***an entitlement. In addition, the needs of existing Career Pathways students are given priority over students who are new to the program, as current students are typically closer to graduation and have demonstrated a history of compliance with CPI policies.***

**Services available to Pathways students may include: career counseling, tuition and registration fees, books, childcare vouchers, gas vouchers, testing fees, tutoring, workshops, supplies, and/or job placement.**

**Tuition:**

Tuition will not be paid until the end of the semester and/or program. Students must make satisfactory progress and meet all program requirements before tuition will be paid. Students who withdraw or stop participating in class will be required to pay for their own classes. In addition, those students will not be eligible to receive any future Career Pathways assistance until they have paid for the same number of credit hours that they withdrew from or did not successfully complete.

***Students who are awarded Career Pathways tuition assistance may not receive enough funds to cover all of their tuition costs. Students will be responsible for paying any remaining charges on their SEARK College accounts and may be dropped for nonpayment.***

**Books:**

Books are available to students through the Career Pathways Book Loan Library. Students may check out required textbooks to use each semester. Students must return their borrowed textbooks in good condition and within five (5) days of their last final. Students who do not return their books will be ineligible to receive further Career Pathways benefits, and an administrative hold will be placed on their accounts in the SEARK College Business and Data Entry Offices, denying students access to transcripts, diplomas, and the ability to register for future classes.

***Students who are authorized to borrow books from Career Pathways may not get all of the books they need for their classes. Because Career Pathways tries to reuse the same books as many times as possible, it is our policy not to purchase workbooks, online***

***codes, or other one-time-use items. Also, priority is given to students receiving Career Pathways tuition assistance and students who don't receive Pell Grant.***

**Transportation:**

Transportation assistance is available to students through a gas voucher program. Students must turn in a Tracking Sheet and work a minimum of one (1) hour per month (may be self-employment) in order to receive transportation assistance. Students enrolled solely in online classes are not eligible for gas vouchers. Any unclaimed gas vouchers will be voided at the end of the month and cannot be reissued. In addition, students who have not picked up gas vouchers two months in a row will no longer be eligible to receive vouchers.

**Childcare:**

Childcare assistance is available to students through a voucher program. In order to receive Career Pathways vouchers, the childcare provider used by the student must be state-certified as a licensed, childcare provider and be willing to accept third-party billing. Students must turn in a Tracking Sheet and work a minimum of one (1) hour per month (may be self-employment) in order to receive childcare assistance. A list of childcare providers is available in the CPI Office. Childcare vouchers are not available to students who only take Internet classes.

**Testing:**

Students may be eligible for assistance with testing fees when funds are available. Students must contact the CPI Office to see if they are eligible. Testing Fee Forms can be picked up in the Career Pathways Office and must be submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the testing fee due date.

***Nursing and Allied Health students will have to participate in NAH-sponsored fundraisers in order to qualify for testing fee assistance.***

**Tracking Sheets:**

Regardless of the benefits they are receiving—tuition, childcare, gas, books, and/or testing fees—***all*** Career Pathways students are required to submit a Tracking Sheet, including work verification, to the Career Pathways Office once a month. Childcare will not be paid and gas vouchers will not be given out until students have turned in their Tracking Sheets. Failure to submit Tracking Sheets in a timely manner can prevent students from being able to obtain

Career Pathways benefits in the future and may even result in a suspension of their current services.

**Career Services:**

The purpose of CPI's Career Support Services is to provide resources and training that enables students to be self-sufficient job-seekers. CPI provides assistance for students to transition from the classroom to the workforce. However, employment success is influenced by the student's academic performance, attendance record, previous employment history/record, and overall attitude. CPI offers students the following career services:

- Pre- and post-employment skills
- Employment assistance
- Employability Certificate
- Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)

**Employability Certificate:**

The Employability Certificate is a requirement for CPI and should be finished within the first semester a student is in the program. The purpose of the Employability Certificate is to help prepare students for the workplace by covering many skills that may not be included in their college experience. The amount of time needed to complete an Employability Certificate will depend on the student's abilities at the beginning of the process and the time spent working towards the certificate. CPI Employability Certificates and CRCs can lead to employment and can be counted as work participation. Once earned, the student will add the Employability Certificate or CRC to his or her résumé as an accomplishment.

**Graduates:**

Career Pathways will follow up on graduates for a year after they attain a certificate or degree and leave the CPI program. CPI offers assistance in finding employment, updating a résumé, or creating a résumé. Graduates are required to keep Career Pathways informed of any updates with their contact information as well as career changes.

**Disclaimer:**

All documentation and requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the Career Pathways Initiative Program. CPI has the right to adjust and/or change any policy at any time

with reasonable notice. All students must attend classes and make satisfactory progress in order to receive assistance. CPI staff will check class attendance through monthly Tracking Sheets and monitor academic progress via end-of-term transcripts.

**Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action:**

SEARK College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution. The College, in compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 and other Civil Rights laws, offers equal opportunity for admission and employment. Additionally, all programs and activities of the College are provided to all students without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, Vietnam-era veteran or special-disabled veteran status, or sex. Questions or concerns regarding affirmative action or disabilities can be directed to:

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Officer  
C/O President's Office  
Southeast Arkansas College  
1900 Hazel Street  
Pine Bluff, AR 71603  
(870) 543-5907

**Contact Information:**

Career Pathways Office	(870) 543-5999	<a href="mailto:CPI@seark.edu">CPI@seark.edu</a>
Lisa Gober	(870) 543-5969	<a href="mailto:lgober@seark.edu">lgober@seark.edu</a>
Tami Watts	(870) 850-4823	<a href="mailto:tlwatts@seark.edu">tlwatts@seark.edu</a>



I have received the SEARK College Career Pathways Student Handbook and understand the policies and procedures indicated within.

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Student Signature

Date

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CPI Staff Signature

Date