

# Southeast Arkansas College



Career Pathways Student Handbook

**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 colleges to develop pathway programs that assist participants earn a marketable, educational 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 skills 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 Initiative locations at two-year colleges throughout the state.

**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 advising, 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
- Contact CPI staff on a regular basis (at least once a month) and as requested
- Your success is your responsibility; the Pathways staff is here to offer assistance as needed
- Keep the Career Pathways staff 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 a dependent child or dependent children (under 21 years old)
- Be a current TEA client *or* receive food stamps, Medicaid, ARKids *or* have a family income less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline.

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

Persons in Family Unit	Monthly	Annual Income
2	\$3,523	\$42,275
3	\$4,443	\$53,325
4	\$5,364	\$64,375
5	\$6,285	\$75,425
6	\$7,206	\$86,475
7	\$8,127	\$97,525
8	\$9,048	\$108,575

*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
- Child/Children’s Social Security Card
- Child/Children’s Birth Certificates
- Proof from DHS showing receipt of food stamps, 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 and a current transcript each semester while in the program
- Placement test scores (COMPASS, ACT, TABE, or SAT)
- Proposed schedule or official registration form
- Book List (go to SEARK.edu, click B&N College link, click Find Textbooks, plug in course name and section number from schedule then print)
- 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 and compliance. When the funding and enrollment limit is maximized, students will be placed on a waiting list and enrolled at a later date based on funding availability.

Career Pathways is not able to provide assistance to students who have already earned a degree (Associate's degree or higher). Exceptions can include students who graduate (walk) in one semester, and then have to take one or more classes the following term to fulfill their graduation requirements, or on a case by case basis.

**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 is in default on a federal student loan or owes a balance to a postsecondary school
- Student has a history of very poor academic performance
- Alteration or falsification of documents
- Student is disrespectful and/or abusive towards staff or other students
- Student does not attend class regularly
- 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 previous hours and/or degree(s) that will allow for employment in a high-demand, high-wage job
- Student is not an active job seeker
- Student is not degree/certificate seeking at SEARK College

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

**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, areas of noncompliance, and corrective action(s) required.
- Excessive noncompliance may result in immediate suspension.

Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) each semester in order to receive assistance. Students who receive less than a 2.0 GPA 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 CPI services. Students who wish to be readmitted 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 all Pathways students each semester. Current CPI students may choose to participate in person or online. Students are required to attend classes on a regular basis and maintain satisfactory progress. The CPI staff will check attendance reports monthly and will contact instructors with concerns. Students are required to meet with CPI staff when requested. Satisfactory progress is determined by the instructor of each class and the CPI Director.

**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, phone numbers, et cetera 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 CPI will be entered into the CPI database. Approximately every six months, students who have become inactive in the program will be withdrawn from the CPI database. Students may be re-entered into the database if they become active participants again.

Typically, students may not be entered or withdrawn from the database more than two times. However, the CPI Director has the ability to re-enroll a student who exceeds this amount if they feel 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 staff will review the student's schedule and discuss degree plan options based on the schedule set by the advisor and student. Students are invited to make an appointment with the Pathways staff to discuss any academic difficulty and graduation plans.

**Career Pathway Initiative Services:**

Please be aware that CPI 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 CPI 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
- 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 CPI 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 CPI 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 non-payment.

**Books:**

Books are available to students through the Career Pathways Book Loan Library. When available, 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 finals. Students who do not return their books will be placed on probation and possibly suspension, and an administrative hold will be placed on their accounts in the SEARK College Business and Data Entry Offices, denying students access to grades, transcripts, and the ability to register for future classes.

Students who are authorized to borrow books from CPI may not get all the books they need for their classes. Because CPI 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. Exceptions can be made for students who do not have grant or scholarship aid.

**Transportation:**

Transportation assistance is available to students through a gas voucher program. Students must work a minimum of one (1) hour per month (may be self-employment) in order to receive transportation assistance. Transportation information is updated each semester and is available in the CPI Office.

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 will not be reissued.

**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 work a minimum of one (1) hour per month (may be self-employment) in order to receive childcare assistance. Childcare information is updated each semester and 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.

**Monthly Tracking Sheets are required of students receiving other CPI benefits such as tuition, books, or testing fees.**

**Career Services:**

The purpose of the Career Support Services of the CPI Program is to provide resources and training that enable students to be self-sufficient job seekers. CPI provides assistance for students to transition from school to the workforce. But remember, employment success is influenced by your 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
- Resume writing
- Employability Certificate

**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/her résumé as an accomplishment.

**Graduates:**

The CPI Staff will follow up on graduates for a year after they attain a certificate or degree and leave the CPI program. CPI staff can offer assistance in finding employment, updating a résumé, or creating a résumé. Graduates are required to keep the CPI staff 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 and progress through Tracking Sheets.

**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:**

CPI 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>
Christen Green	(870) 850-4823	<a href="mailto:cgreen@seark.edu">cgreen@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 \_\_\_\_\_