

## Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation

### Country paper: United States of America

In advance of the symposium all attending countries are asked to produce a country paper setting out the key issues for their countries in relation to the key themes of the conference.

Please use this template to enter your information. You should aim to be concise. Use bullet points and links rather than providing a lot of local detail. **The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length.**

How to submit:

- Download the Country Paper Template, save this on your computer.
- Prepare the country paper based on consultation within the country team and preferably with relevant national authorities and information sources.
- Submit the Country Paper by sending it to [jmc@iccdpp.org](mailto:jmc@iccdpp.org) (John Mc Carthy, director ICCDPP)
- Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> of January**

If you have questions concerning the country paper, please contact John Mc Carthy ([jmc@iccdpp.org](mailto:jmc@iccdpp.org))

### Background information

1. List all of the members of your country team with their organisation.

The United States team is sponsored by the National Career Development Association and includes:

Rebecca Dedmond, NCDA Member from George Washington University

Kathy Evans, NCDA President Elect from University of South Carolina

Seth Hayden, NCDA President Elect from Wake Forest University

Brian Hutchison, NCDA Treasurer from New Jersey City University

Spencer G. Niles, NCDA President from College of William & Mary

Deneen Pennington, NCDA Executive Director

2. What are the key aims your country has for participating in this symposium?

It is the privilege of the USA Team to participate in the ICCDPP 2019 International Symposium. As reported in Question #3 below, we believe the current level of policy interest in career development is relatively static within our country. This is not acceptable given the rapidly changing and dynamic world-of-work therefore we will use the ICCDPP experience to reenergize national discourse and advocate for more comprehensive and just career policies and practices. To this end, we have two presentation slots reserved for the upcoming NCDG Global Conference in Houston, TX, June, 2018; will submit a report to the NCDG Board including recommendations for advancing career development policy; develop a social media presence to engage constituents in conversation; and submit articles to both *Career Convergence* and *Career Developments* magazines.



### Theme #1 - Context and challenges for career development policy.

In your country...

3. Is the level of policy interest in career development:

- Growing?
- Shrinking?
- Staying about the same?

Comment

The United States is in a period of *pendulum politics*. With a stated objective of reversing and/or eliminating previous policies, the current administration is disrupting the world-of-work in ways that are unsettling for workers. The result is a heightened sense of precariousness that permeates most sectors of the labour market. Currently these disruptions themselves are the focus of our national discourse at the expense of a more productive conversation including evidence-based dialogue led by career development professionals and scholars.

4. What are the key political, social, economic and technological issues that are likely to have an impact on people's lives and careers in your country?

Give up to five of the most important issues as you see them.

1	Climate Change
2	Immigration Policy including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
3	Student Debt Burden
4	Trade Policy
5	Lack of skilled, technical workforce development (i.e., non-college)

5. What roles do career development programmes and services play in addressing these political, social, economic and technological challenges?

We have identified seven key policy issues that portend further instability for the workforce. After eliminating as list options career development programmes for those 65 years or older and the influence of technology (e.g., artificial intelligence, robotics), we arrived at the five issues listed above. Climate change is creating hardship in every corner of the country including [the farming industry](#) in the American Mid-West, [tourism](#) in the South, and [entire economies](#) in California. Immigration policy has been politicized to focus on migrants from the Southern border with Mexico, yet approximately [10.7 million precarious immigrants](#) and [their children](#) have been in legal limbo for years. The student debt burden sits at [\\$1.5 trillion USD](#) yet federal policies continue to be [overturned in courts](#) as the government seems to be working against educational debt holders. A more aggressive stance towards international trade has at best resulted in renamed agreements and at worst is putting the world economy, as well as [US jobs](#), under threat. Finally, like many of our ICCDPP partners the US has leveraged four-year college as a blueprint for personal success while ignoring the work that the labour market actually demands creating [a skills gap](#) between workforce training and job availability.

Career development programmes and services play a varied role in addressing any of these five issues. Using a 5-point scale for context with a 5 meaning highly engaged and 1 meaning engaged very little, we evaluate the level of engagement in parentheses in the remainder of this paragraph. Climate change (1) is either most often in communities with low access to career services (e.g., farming, tourism) or is being lived out while in crisis mode (e.g., California wildfires). Immigration policy and DACA (3) does receive more focused career services through immigrant and refugee resettlement programs (e.g., [refugee and immigrant resettlement programs](#)) and the prevalence of DACA students in secondary school and higher education settings where career services are most robust. Student debt burden (2) disproportionately hits low income students where career services are not prevalent. Further, overall expectations for the millennial generation will be [worse off than their parents](#) has created a global sense of acceptance of economic hardship and unfulfilling work. Trade policy (3) might expect intermittent access and use of career services programs via corporate shutdown transition plans and/or access to the US [one-stop shop career centres](#) which are prevalent in most all areas of the country. Finally, workforce development (4) is the area with the highest level of engagement because there are multiple avenues to career services access including trade school career centres, trade union career development programmes, one-stop shop career centres, and more.



## Theme #2 - Aims for, and access to, career development

In your country...

6. What are the key policy aims for career development programmes and services?

In the United States, the two key agencies that establish national policies are the Department of Labour (DOL) and the Department of Education (DOE). The DOL develops policies that are designed to promote the welfare and assure the rights of workers, job applicants, and retirees. It also is charged with developing opportunities for employment. The DOE creates and administers policies

that helps education and enforces federal laws regarding education regarding privacy and civil rights. That said, other private and/or professional organizations committed to career development have established their own policies that have had a national impact. For example, career development is one of three domains of the American School Counsellor Association's (ASCA) [National Model](#). The model has made a huge impact on school counselling programs throughout the nation. For ASCA, the goal is to assist counsellors in developing programs that will help their students explore the world of work, understand themselves, and make the connection between their personal qualities, education, and work. The National Career Development Association (NCDA) has also played a significant global role by developing competencies for career counselling (i.e., National Career Development Guidelines) and initiating corresponding training programs (e.g., Facilitating Career Development) and [competency-based credentials](#).

The challenge for the people of the United States in this current political environment is that the policies are subject to change overnight. For example, Every Student Succeeds Act was passed with bipartisan support in 2015. It was enacted to ensure all P-12 students would have equal access to education but was recently turned into just words on a page because the 2017 congress voted to vacate the regulations designed to uphold the law.

7. What groups of people can access career development programmes and services and what groups are excluded?

Because of mandatory education, all children should have access to career development and education while attending school. Those who continue their education have access to college and university career counselling and advisement as students and after they graduate. Often non-student members of the community with career development needs are served by community colleges. The DOE also runs a program for veterans who need career assistance to transition back into the work force. Individuals with illness or disabilities are able to receive assistance from the DOE's Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Individuals who have lost their jobs and are looking for a new one, are able to connect with one of America's Job Centre offices run by the DOL. These career services are also offered to people in publicly run facilities such as libraries. Young people from low income families between the ages of 16 and 24 can participate in Job Corps where they not only get career assistance, they can also complete their high school diploma and enter post-secondary education. Ex-offenders have access to career development programs as well.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement helps refugees with finding jobs and becoming certified or licensed in the United State for their previous profession. It also helps those who wish to start their own businesses. Individuals who have the personal funds have access to private career counsellors and coaches.

Those who do not have access to career assistance are usually those who have transportation issues, live in rural communities where the facilities are out of reach, or have significant life circumstances that interfere with access to quality career services (e.g., incarcerated persons). There are not enough of the programs available for everyone who needs them to be able to access them. Even with the school programs, some school districts are so poor or have so many other pressing issues that career development needs become low priority. Over-crowded correctional facilities due to mass incarceration offer few programs for offenders and ex-offenders. Although young immigrants

enrolled in school can benefit from the career development programs schools offer, there are no programs focused on undocumented adult immigrants and the simple act of seeking employment could trigger deportation for them.

8. How are the opinions of citizens and service users heard and incorporated into policy and practice?

Federal land state laws and policies are vetted through government hearings and auditing processes. Locally, college and university career centres routinely ask for feedback from their consumers to report to accrediting agencies which require that they obtain such information. Often the programs that are supported by the DOL are funded with renewable grants. Assessments to see how well the program is working are usually required and some agencies are audited. Accountability is a focus in schools, yet there is great variation across educational systems. In some states school counsellors are required to empanel advisory boards and collect evaluation data on the programs they offer.

9. Is there a framework for ethical practice in career development? How does this framework balance the interests of the individual with the demands of policy and signals from the labour market?

While there are no overarching ethical guidelines, career practitioners who are members of professional organizations subscribe to the ethical codes of that organization. For example, NCSA members adhere to the ethical codes of that organization. Members of the International Coach Federation adhere to its ethical codes, and members of National Association of Colleges and Employers adhere to their codes. There are broad similarities in the various codes (e.g., put the clients' needs first, do no harm).



### Theme #3 – Integrating career development into wider society.

In your country...

10. Which ministries or jurisdictions are responsible for career development programmes and services? Clarify what programmes and services each ministry or jurisdiction has responsibility for.

This is somewhat varied given the decentralization of responsibilities between national and state bodies of government. The U.S. Department of Labor oversees elements of occupational safety, wage and hour standards, and other work-related concerns such as unemployment insurance benefits. CareerOneStop, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor does provide direct support for career exploration, training, and jobs via online mechanisms and over 2,500 American Job Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

Within the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides substantial information on labor economics such as US labor market trends within various occupational fields, specific

population and regional hiring patterns, and other reportable statistics. Other agencies within the Department of Labor focus on enhancing the occupational well-being of various populations such as the Office of Disabilities Employment Policy which promotes policies and coordinates with employers to increase workplace success for people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education also focuses on career and technical education providing support for localized efforts via grants for career and technical-focused efforts while also assisting states with accountability and implementation efforts associated with various initiatives.

Military-focused agencies within the U.S. government (e.g. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) provide a substantial amount of career development programming and support to assist segments of the populations such as military service members, veterans, and their families with transitioning from the military occupational environment to the civilian world-of-work. Military installations and Veterans Administrations hospitals and clinics provide career programming and services directly to military-connected individuals.

States often provide substantial career development programs and services within their local branches of education and labor. Grants and other funded support for career development programs are used to support employment-focused efforts. Given varying economic and occupational circumstances, there is significant variance in the type of initiatives that are enacted within each state.

Apart from federal and state support, post-secondary institutions of higher education offer programs and services for students designed to enhance employment prospects upon enter the workforce. Office of career services are found within these institutions and focus on the career development of their students.

11. What leadership, co-ordination and collaboration approaches exist within the career development system to ensure collaboration across different sectors and different types of clients. For example, how are career development systems within the education system connected to those within employment, health and youth work?

While there are efforts to collaborate within federal and state agencies, there are challenges as the siloing of services and efforts often occurs. The state branches of the U.S. Department of Labor report to their federal counterparts that can provide enhanced resources. As recently as July of 2018, the current administration called for the merging of the Departments of Education and Labor, but there is no current legislative effort to enact this change.

There are instances in which collaboration among agencies occurs such as with the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration, but there has also been calls for enhanced collaboration between these agencies to the benefit of those they serve.

Professional organizations such as the National Career Development Association, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, and initiatives such as the recent National Career Development Summit held in 2018 and the Labor-Management Collaboration offered venues where professionals within various federal and state agencies connected with the potential for

collaboration to account for gaps in programs and services they offer. Collaboration tends to be more organic based on perceived needs and less systemic.

12. What are the main challenges to leadership in the field and the main obstacles to effective collaboration?

There are several challenges to effective career developed-focused collaboration in the U.S. The lack of centralized federal career development leadership and locality-oriented responsibility creates barriers to equality in available programs, services, and resources. Though well-intentioned efforts are continually initiated, the division of federal and state implementation of career development supports makes for inconsistent and at times disjointed efforts to serve those in need via effective collaboration. In addition, the changing of political priorities within federal and state governments can dramatically alter the degree of financial support career-development efforts receive within a given time-period hindering momentum as participants in the process change per the focus of various administrations.

In addition, there are disparate professional identities with career coaches, counsellors, psychologists, and social workers having unique training and credentialing creating divisions within those who engage in career development work. Demarcations between professions creates an “us and them” orientation making it challenging for effective collaboration and shared efforts related to career development services.

13. What kind of cooperation (if any) is there between the career development services and stakeholders like employers, trade unions, the media, NGOs, professional organisations etc?

This has been an emerging aspect of career development work with the U.S. There is a growing awareness of the benefit for those who provide career services to be connected to professionals in various occupational fields. Career development centres in post-secondary institutions offer career fairs, employer panels, and networking opportunities in which employers directly engage with aspiring professionals. In addition, career fairs are also held within municipalities enabling citizens to explore career opportunities. There is lack of consistent engagement between trade unions and career services as there is variance in the presence of trade unions within the U.S. as some states are “right to work” states meaning union security agreements are prohibited. Apprenticeships and internships are other means in which career services facilitate connections between those seeking employment and occupational entities. These opportunities occur within states and regions and are not coordinated at the federal level.

14. How is the professionalism of career development workers developed and maintained whilst working with other professionals?

The professionalism of career development workers in the U.S. is largely facilitated by professional organizations such as the National Career Development Association and the National Association of



Colleges and Employers. Accreditation standards for counselling programs outlined by the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Education Related Programs includes a focus on career counselling within the professional identity section of the standards. In addition, credentialing is a means in which career development worker professionalism is affirmed. The Global Career Development Facilitator certification along with recently instituted competency-based credentials by the National Career Development Association contribute to the professionalism of career development in the U.S. There is also a myriad of additional credentials focused on specific aspects of career services such as resume writing and career assessment delivery.

15. Do other types of professionals (e.g. teachers and social workers) deliver career development? How is a professional service ensured?

Other professionals outside of counselling deliver career services. The American School Counsellor Association National Model outlines dimensions of career development to be enacted within schools requiring connections with other school professionals to ensure the effective implementation of the model. Career centres at U.S. colleges and universities are not required to hire counsellors and often are staffed with professionals from outside the helping professions who provide career services. Social workers also provide career services as they serve in various career development capacities within governmental agencies such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The quality of professional service often ensured through the inter-agency evaluation of outcome data related to career programs and services. Professional organizations often serve to ensure professional service and standards of practice, but this mechanism lacks mandatory affiliation requirements within the U.S.



#### Theme #4 - Leading innovative change for the future.

In your country...

16. What are the key innovations or ways that career development programmes and services have changed over the last 10 years? This could include changes relating to technology, practice, management and governance and the use of new theories and evidence.

Building on the work of the ICCDPP Team report of 2017, NCDCA has launched a range of credentials for career services providers that is growing in momentum and further defines the roles and ethics, elevating the status of the providers and of the profession. NCDCA gains momentum by partnering with the Career Coalition and its membership of over 32 workforce and talent development advocate organizations such as the National Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the national, state, and regional technical associations, the National Manufacturer's Association, and America's Promise.



Creating partnerships serve to strengthen ties between high school preparation and local economies and workforces. reference South Dakota Governor's training and creating jobs for School Career Development Advisors (SCDAs) as a model of what can work. As educators and employers work together new and relevant curriculum innovations motivate students as they see the relationship between subjects and workforce preparation. In the state of South Dakota, [the Governor's Office works with NCDAs to pilot test a program](#) certifying School Career Development Advisors to work with high school students. Student engagement is increased as teachers feel more empowered as they work with employers to provide more relevant curriculum and meaningful assessments of learning.

Another state focuses on every student creating a high school culminating project, designing an individualized [Portrait of a Graduate](#). Required collaboration between educators and employers impacts the middle and high school curriculum's deeper reflections on studies and experiences that inform students' education and career decisions. Students learn to see themselves as contributing, productive citizens.

While above are specific, decentralized innovations that are emerging at a local and regional level, there are broader innovations emerging. The coaching model continues to develop as a means of delivering services resulting in an increasing proliferation of models, trainings, and practitioners. Concurrently, there appears to be more enthusiasm for assessments to be delivered via on-line mechanisms. Finally, we recognize a changing public discourse, supported by research findings such as that from Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, causing and responsive shift from promoting a four-year university degree to the need for varieties of workforce preparation.

17. How do national policies and initiatives, where they exist, ensure and support the development of innovation in career development services provision?

The United States of America is really a decentralized society, with the federal government creating broad policy parameters while states typically create policy and earmark budget funds for programs and innovations. There are exceptions such as one former state governor who now sits in the US Senate who supports legislation for apprenticeship options to broaden viable post-secondary learning and job opportunities that ultimately will strengthen the economy by filling large numbers of workplace needs, especially in areas close to military bases and manufacturing. The reality is that federal initiatives are typically not funded at a level that would impact programs locally except when the programs are delivered in federal facilities (e.g., Veterans Administration centres).

18. What new, innovative and promising interventions in career development programmes and services is your country planning for the future? How are such innovations making the most of open data initiatives, online technologies, artificial intelligence and other forms of innovation?

The emerging trend is local; educational institutions including k-12 schools as well as higher education institutions are partnering with regional economic development organizations to: 1) introduce new, market-intelligent focus in education to meet the labour specific demands of the

community; 2) better align regional employment data with educators, advisors, and educational counsellors; 3) focus on career pathways that meet the immediate and projected needs for local employment; 4) rebrand regional workforce development efforts as communities compete with one another to attract preferred industries; 5) build STEM skills, specifically cyber focused workforce capacity.

19. How is the training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers professionals encouraging innovation and taking account of new evidence as well as changes in technology and the labour market?

NCDA's competency-based credentialing initiative aligns with specific training program for each level of career practice, ensuring that there is a knowledge and skill-based assessment of credentialed practitioners. This initiative is managed by a sitting Commission of experts who continuously adapt to changing conditions and determine salient content for the assessments. The NCDA Counselor Education Academy provides a training forum for Counselor Educators who teach career counselling courses. Participants attend a 3-day training workshop at each NCDA Annual Conference, and then interact with experienced mentors throughout the year as they work on a teaching project. Again, this model allows for adaptation to changing conditions which results in innovative practices within counselling programs all over the country.

### Final reflections

20. Is there anything else that you could like to address through participating in this symposium?

Our team is interested in learning more about how small or "grass roots" groups promote and advocate for career development policy and intervention effectively. Being a decentralized country, we need to leverage marketing, social media, and research information and techniques to "convince" stakeholders of the importance of career development, commiserate interventions, and impactful policies. We are also interested in case study examples of success (and possibly failure) from other countries that have made an impact in similar contexts such as ours. Finally, we would benefit from specific action items for ICCDPP country teams so that we are prepared to deliver on our promise to impact policy and delivery of innovative programs to the benefit of clients and communities.