WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

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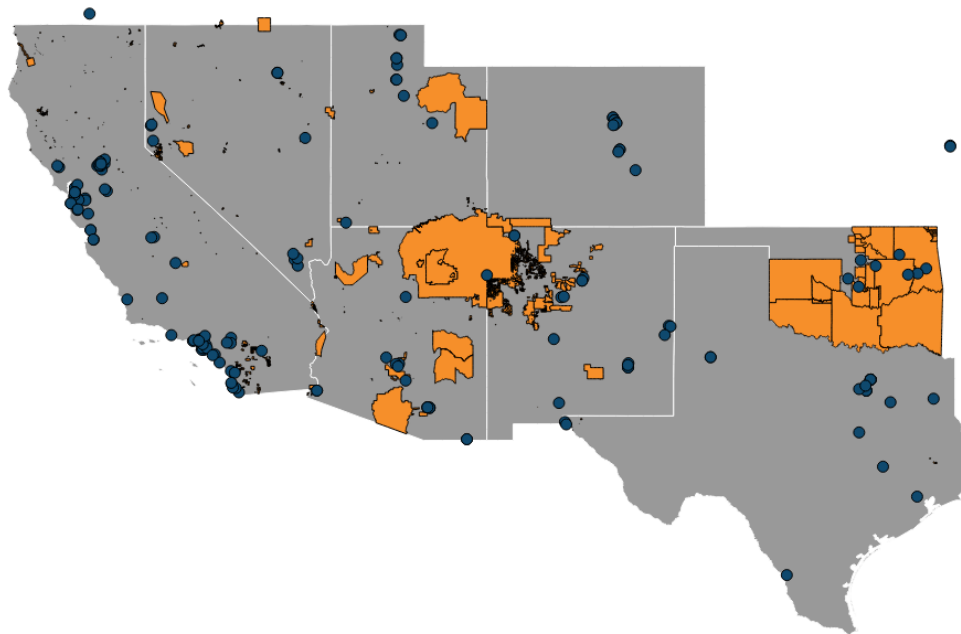
Visualizing SWTWC Resources

(SWTWC, 2016)

What are workplace competencies and why are they important?

"A large percentage of young people preparing to enter the workforce over the next two decades are significantly lacking in the "soft" or applied skills – such as teamwork, decision making, and communication – that will help them become effective employees and managers."

(Source: "Soft skills to pay the bills: Mastering soft skills for workplace success," U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2012).

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SCANS' Framework of Essential Workplace Skills

"To date, the **Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)** remains a popular document focused on essential workplace skills."

"Commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, SCANS convened in 1990 to identify the skills that American workers needed for job success in a global market."

[("What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America," 2000)](#)

(Quoted in: "Workplace essential skills: Resources related to the SCANS competencies and foundation skills," ACT, Inc., 2000)

Workplace Competencies	Foundation Skills
Resources	Basic Skills
Allocates Time	Reading
Allocates Money	Writing
Allocates Materials and Facility Resources	Arithmetic
Information	Mathematics
Acquires and Evaluates Information	Listening
Organizes and Maintains Information	Speaking
Interprets and Communicates Information	**Thinking Skills**
Uses Computers to Process Information	Creative thinking
Interpersonal	Decision making
Participates as a member of a team	Problem solving
Teaches others	Seeing things in the mind's eye
Serves clients/customers	Knowing how to learn
Exercises leadership	Reasoning
Works with cultural diversity	**Personal Qualities**
Systems	Responsibility
Understands systems	Self-esteem
Monitors and corrects performance	Social
Technology	Self-management
Selects technology	Integrity/honesty
Applies technology to task	
Maintains and troubleshoots technology	

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*"According to a survey by Adeccor Staffing USA, **44 percent** of executives said a lack of soft skills was the biggest proficiency gap they saw in the U.S. workforce."*

*"In a report from the International Association of Administrative Professionals, OfficeTeam and HR.com, **67 percent of HR managers said they'd hire a candidate with strong soft skills** even if his or her technical abilities were lacking, while just 9 percent would hire someone with strong technical credentials but weak soft skills."*

(Quoted in: "HR's hard challenge: When employees lack soft skills," Feffer, 2016).

Job Outlook 2016: Attributes Employers Want To See...

"According to [**National Association of Colleges and Employers**] (NACE)'s *Job Outlook 2016* survey, [employers] are looking for leaders who can work as part of a team. More than **80 percent** of responding employers said they look for evidence of leadership skills on the candidate's resume, and nearly as many seek out indications that the candidate is able to work in a team. Employers also cited written communication skills, problem-solving skills, verbal communication skills, and a strong work ethic as important candidate attributes."

(Quoted in: "Attributes employers want to see on new college graduates' resumes," NACE, 2015)

(Source: *Job Outlook 2016*, National Association of Colleges and Employers

Attribute	% of respondents
Leadership	80.1
Ability to work in a team	78.9
Communication skills (written)	70.2
Problem-solving skills	70.2
Communication skills (verbal)	68.9
Strong work ethic	68.9
Initiative	65.8
Analytical/quantitative skills	62.7
Flexibility/adaptability	60.9
Technical skills	59.6
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	58.4
Computer skills	55.3
Detail-oriented	52.8
Organizational ability	48.4
Friendly/outgoing personality	35.5
Strategic planning skills	26.7
Creativity	23.6
Tactfulness	20.5
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	18.6

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***Soft skills** are essential for developing a skilled and competent workforce.*

Competency Models

"A **competency** is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform "critical work functions" or tasks in a defined work setting. Not to be confused with competence, a competency describes a behavior, but does not attempt to describe a level of performance."

"A **competency model** is a collection of competencies that together define successful performance in a particular work setting(, and) are the foundation for important human resource functions – e.g., recruitment and hiring, training and development, and performance management – because they specify what is essential to select for or to train and develop."

(Source: "Competency Models – Communicating Industry's Education and Training Needs," U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), 2015).

"Building Blocks" for Competency Models

OCCUPATION RELATED

INDUSTRY RELATED
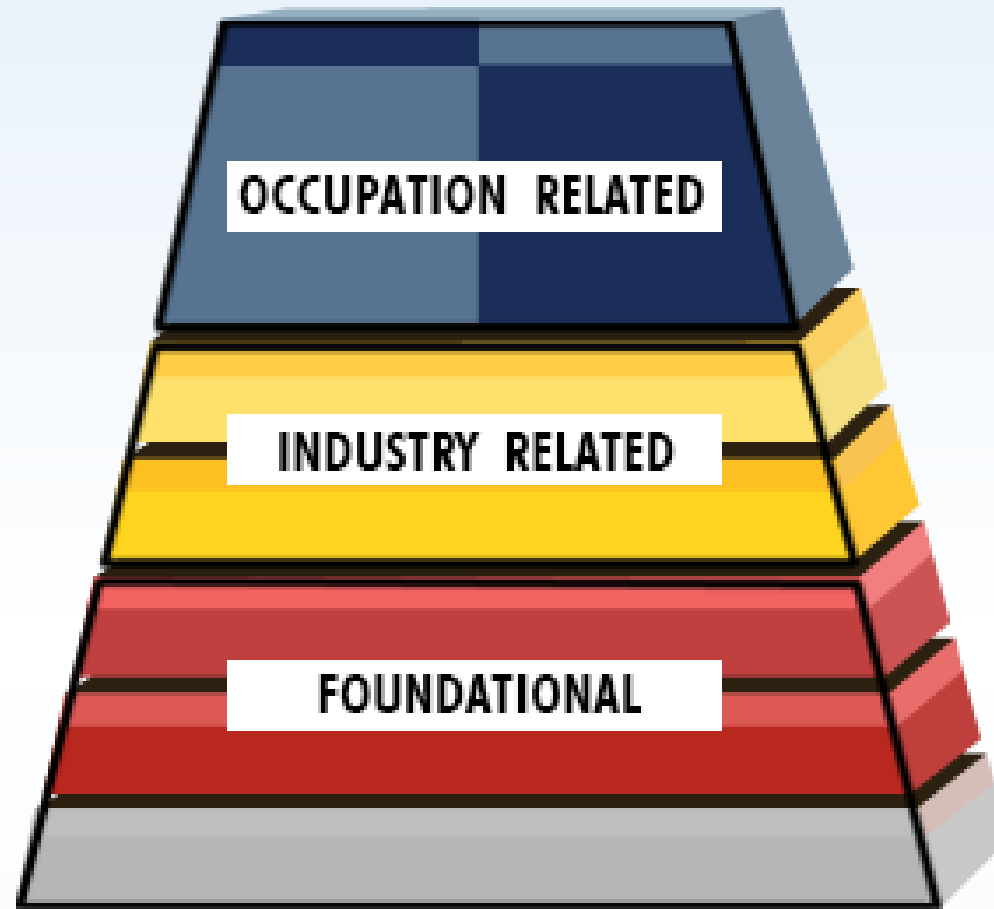
FOUNDATIONAL

(U.S. DOL, ETA, 2015)

Foundational Competencies

- Tier 1 – Personal Effectiveness
  - Essential for all life roles – roles as a member of a family, of a community, and of the larger society.

- Tier 2 – Academic Competencies
  - Critical competencies; e.g., cognitive functions and thinking styles, primarily learned in an academic setting

- Tier 3 – Workplace Competencies
  - Skills and abilities that allow individuals to function in an organizational setting
  - Also frequently referred to as Work Readiness Competencies

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Tier 1: Personal Effectiveness

- Interpersonal Skills
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Initiative
- Dependability & Reliability
- Willingness to Learn

Tier 2: Academic Competencies

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Communication - Listening & Speaking
- Critical & Analytic Thinking
- Active Learning
- Basic Computer Skills

Tier 3: Workplace Competencies

- Teamwork
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Customer Focus
- Planning & Organizing
- Creative Thinking
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Working with Tools & Technology
- Workplace Computer Applications
- Scheduling & Coordinating
- Checking, Examining & Recording
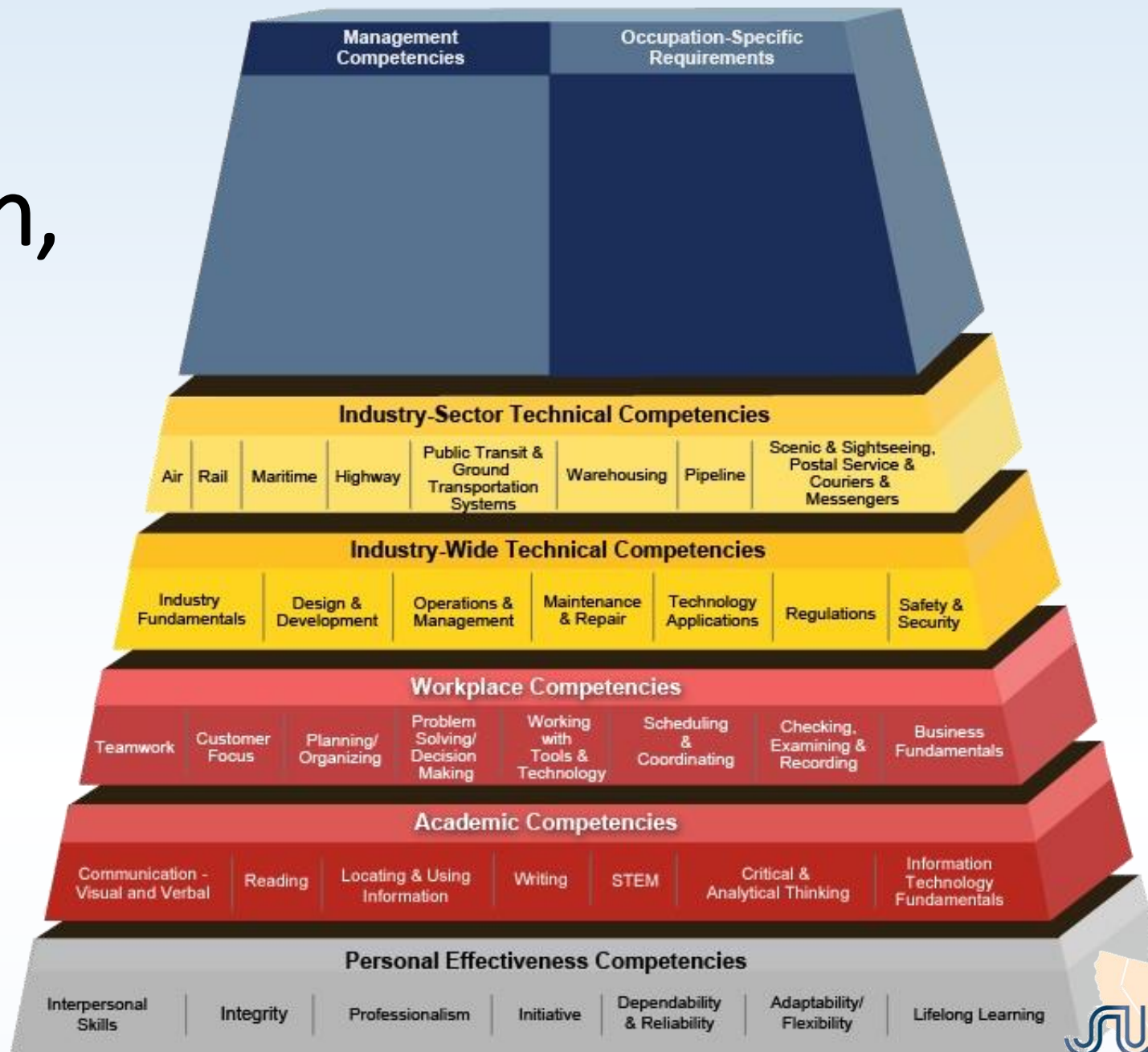- Business Fundamentals

(U.S. DOL, ETA, 2015)

Geospatial Technology Competency Model

(Source: U.S. DOL, ETA, 2014)
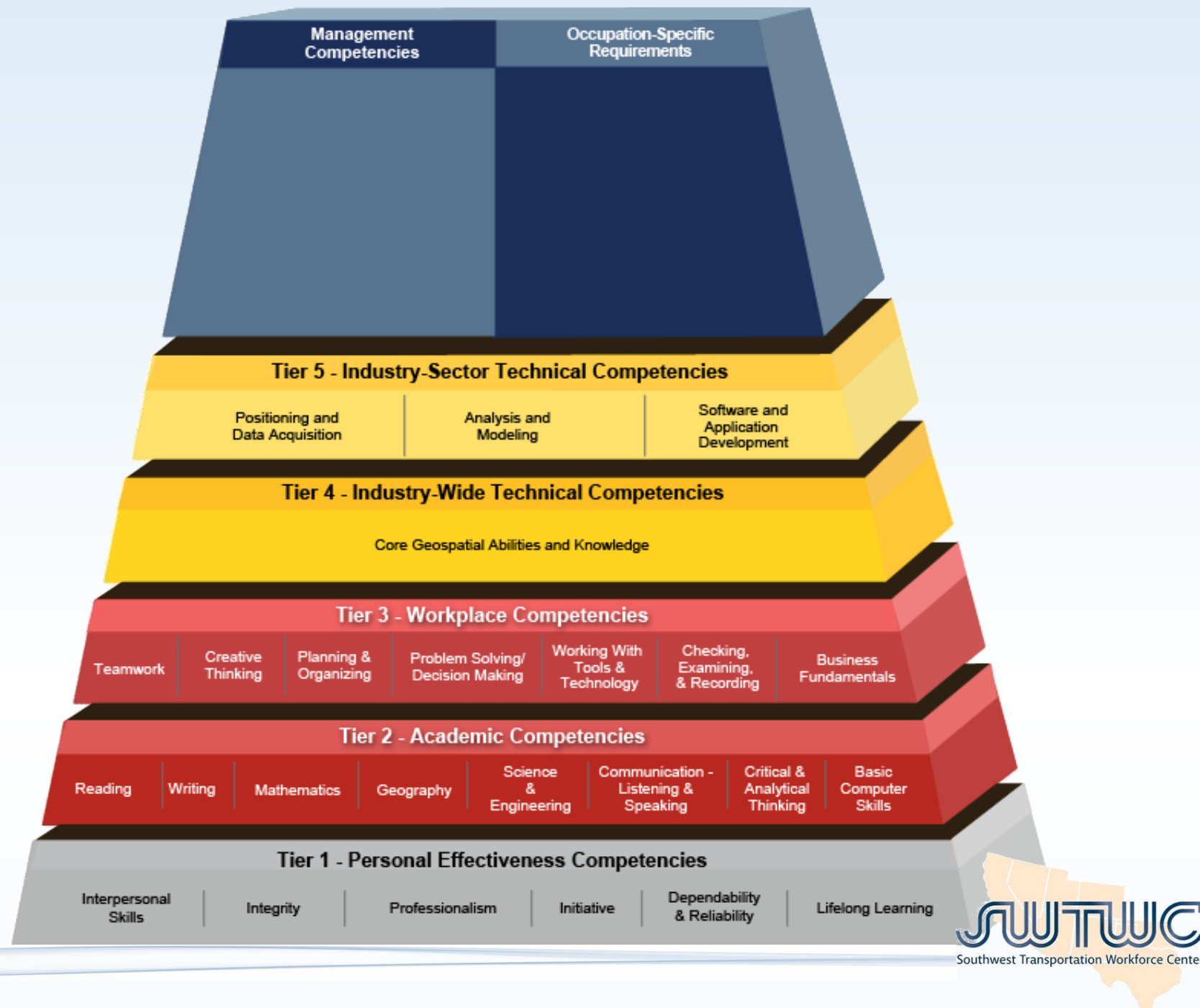
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Competency Model

(Source: U.S. DOL, ETA, 2014)

Transportation, Distribution and Logistics Career Cluster Knowledge and Skills

(Source: Advance Career and Technical Education (CTE), 2008)

Academic Foundations	Communications	Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
Information Technology Applications	Systems	Safety, Health and Environmental
Leadership and Teamwork	Ethics and Legal Responsibilities	Employability and Career Development
	Technical Skills	

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Models in Action: Transportation Learning Center Launches New Competency-Based Curriculum for Transit Occupation

- "The Transportation Learning Center is working with labor and management subject matter experts, as well as educators and trainers involved in workforce development and career and technical education, to develop the Transit Core Competencies Curriculum (TC3).

- TC3 will contain instructor-ready coursework for multiple modules for transit agencies, community colleges, and career and technical education secondary schools. The initiative is designed to reach out to young people and adults in the communities public transportation serves, introduce them to frontline career opportunities, and provide them with the baseline knowledge and skills to succeed in the industry."

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(Source: "Models in Action," U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), 2016).

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