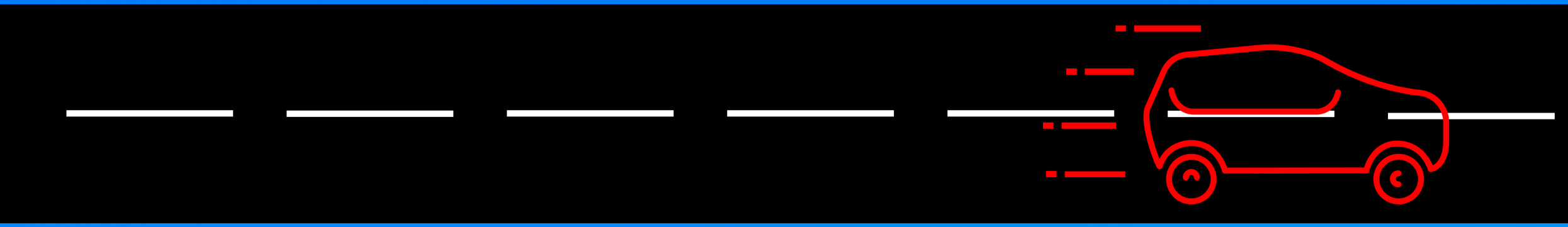
Northeast Texas Pathways

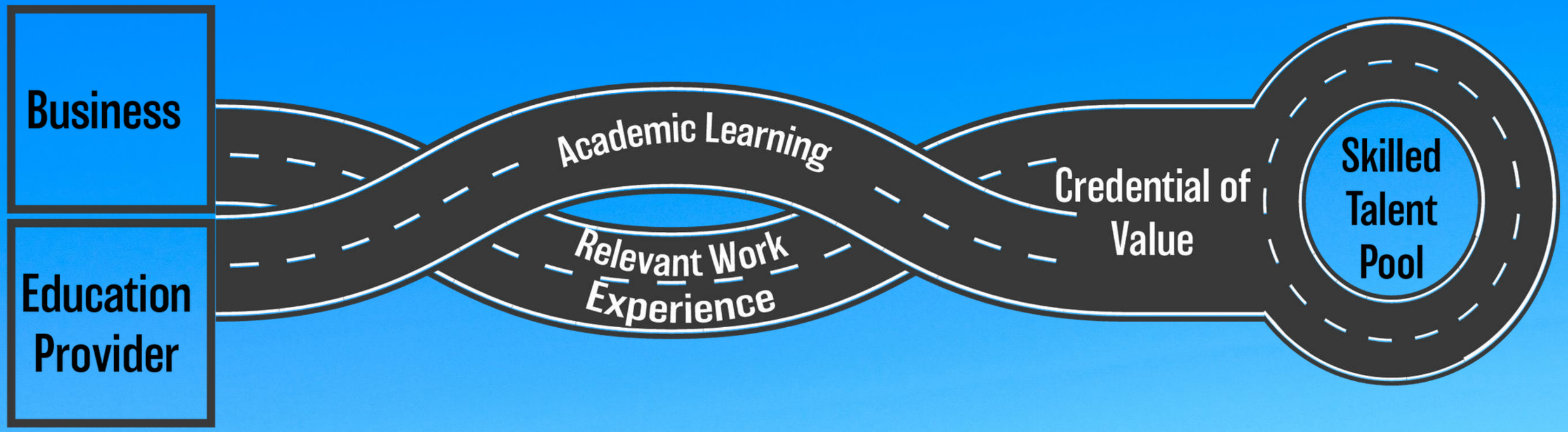
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network



Guide for Employers: Implementing an Effective Work-Based Learning Program for Recruitment and Employee Development

Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs bridge the gap between academic learning and practical work experience, providing benefits for both employers and employees.


Business
Education Provider
Academic Learning
Relevant Work Experience
Credential of Value
Skilled Talent Pool

Guiding Principles of Work Based Learning

Align to Career Pathways

Work-based learning experiences build knowledge, skills, and competencies aligned with in-demand careers and support participants in advancing along career pathways, leading to measurable economic success.

Identify and Validate Skills to be Gained

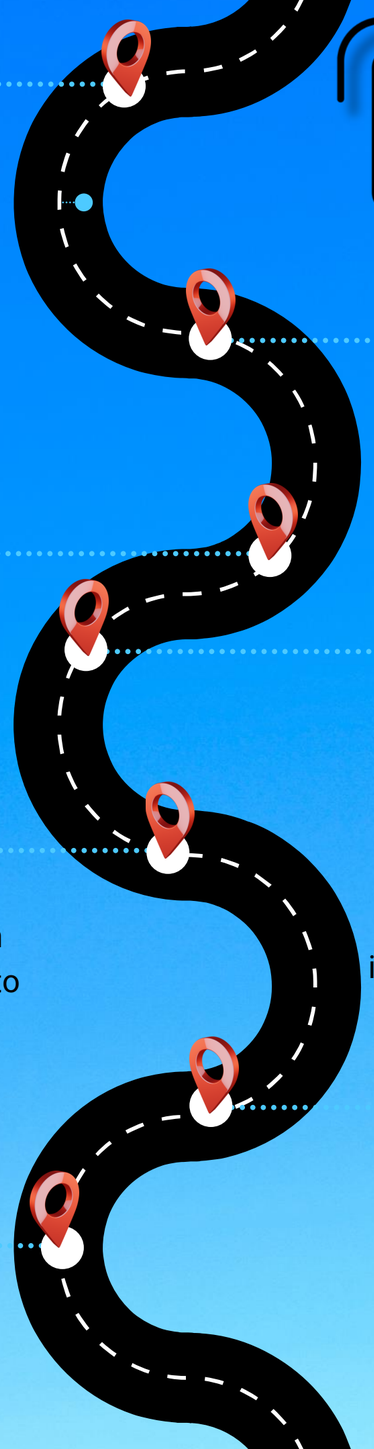
WBL programs are more valuable to both participants and employers when everyone has a clear understanding of the skills that participants are expected to attain and when there are clear guidelines for verifying that participants have mastered those skills.

Support Academic Progress and Achievement

By demonstrating the real-world value of classroom learning and providing students with opportunities to apply and contextualize their knowledge and skills, WBL supports and accelerates academic progress and achievement at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Measure Shared Progress

Employer, participant, and program outcomes are measured and monitored using metrics that are transparent and hold all partners accountable for success



Incorporate Meaningful Job Tasks

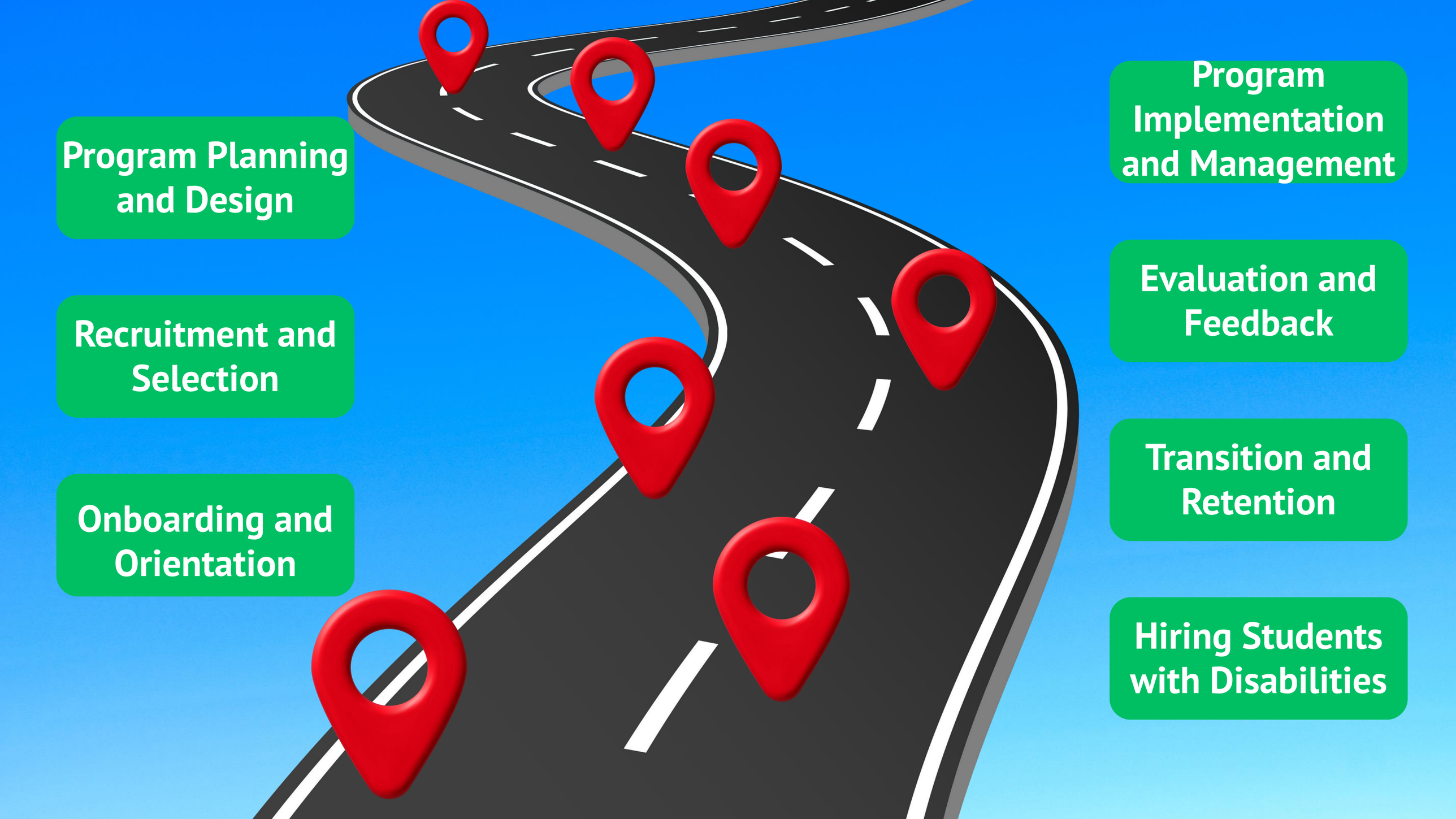
Participants in work-based learning must have opportunities to engage in appropriately complex and industry-relevant tasks that build career skills and knowledge.

Reward Skill Gains and offer Compensation

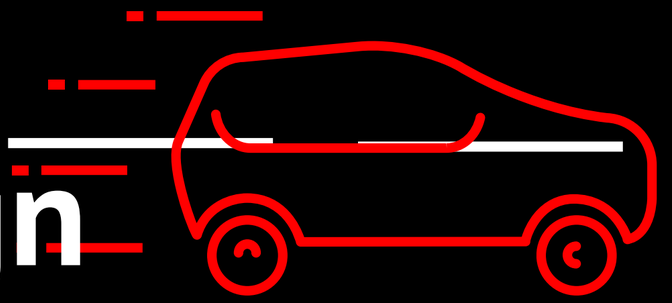
Skill development is recognized and rewarded through mechanisms such as opportunities to take on greater responsibility, high school or postsecondary credit, opportunities to transition to permanent employment, and promotions for incumbent workers. Participants earn compensation as appropriate for the work they complete.

Integrate Opportunities to Develop Professional Networks

Intentionally embed opportunities to build professional networks within WBL experiences and ensure that participants are educated about the value of professional networks to their future careers.


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Program Planning and Design



Define Objectives

- Identify the goals of the WBL program
  - Skill Development
  - Talent Pipeline
  - Employee Retention
  - Advancement

- Align the program to the organizational needs and strategic goals

Program Planning and Design

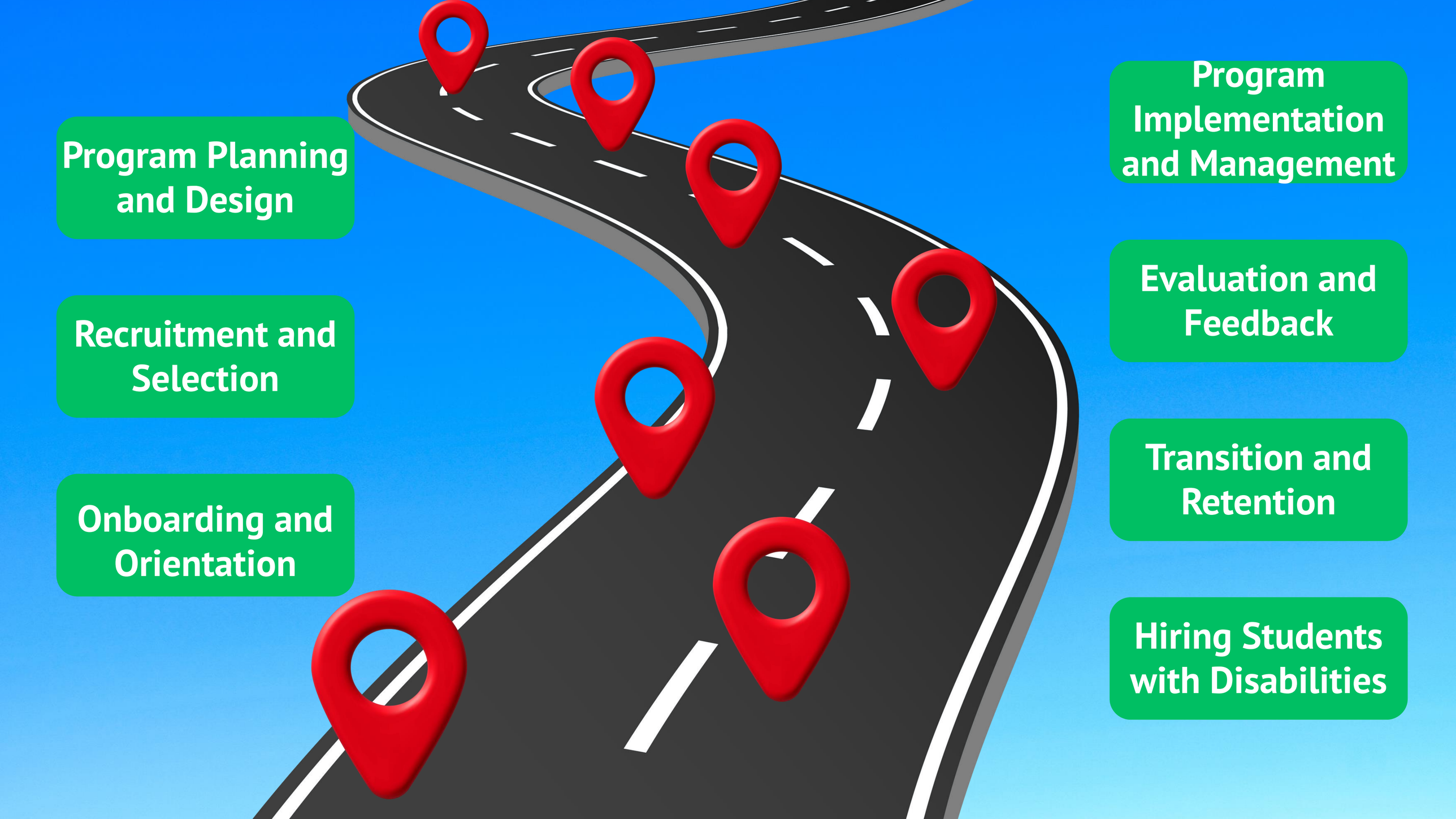
Partnerships

- Collaborate with educational institutions, training providers, and industry associations
- Align the program to the organizational needs and strategic goals

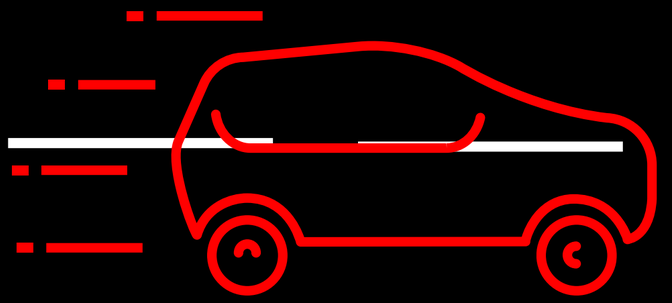
Program Planning and Design

Program Structure

- Decide on the type of WBL program
  - Internships
  - Apprenticeships
  - Co-Op Programs
  - Mentorships
- Define the duration, schedule, and structure of the program to fit both organizational needs and participants availability


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Recruitment and Selection



Candidate Profile

- Define the skills qualifications and attributes needed for participants
- Develop clear job descriptions and program expectations

Recruitment and Selection

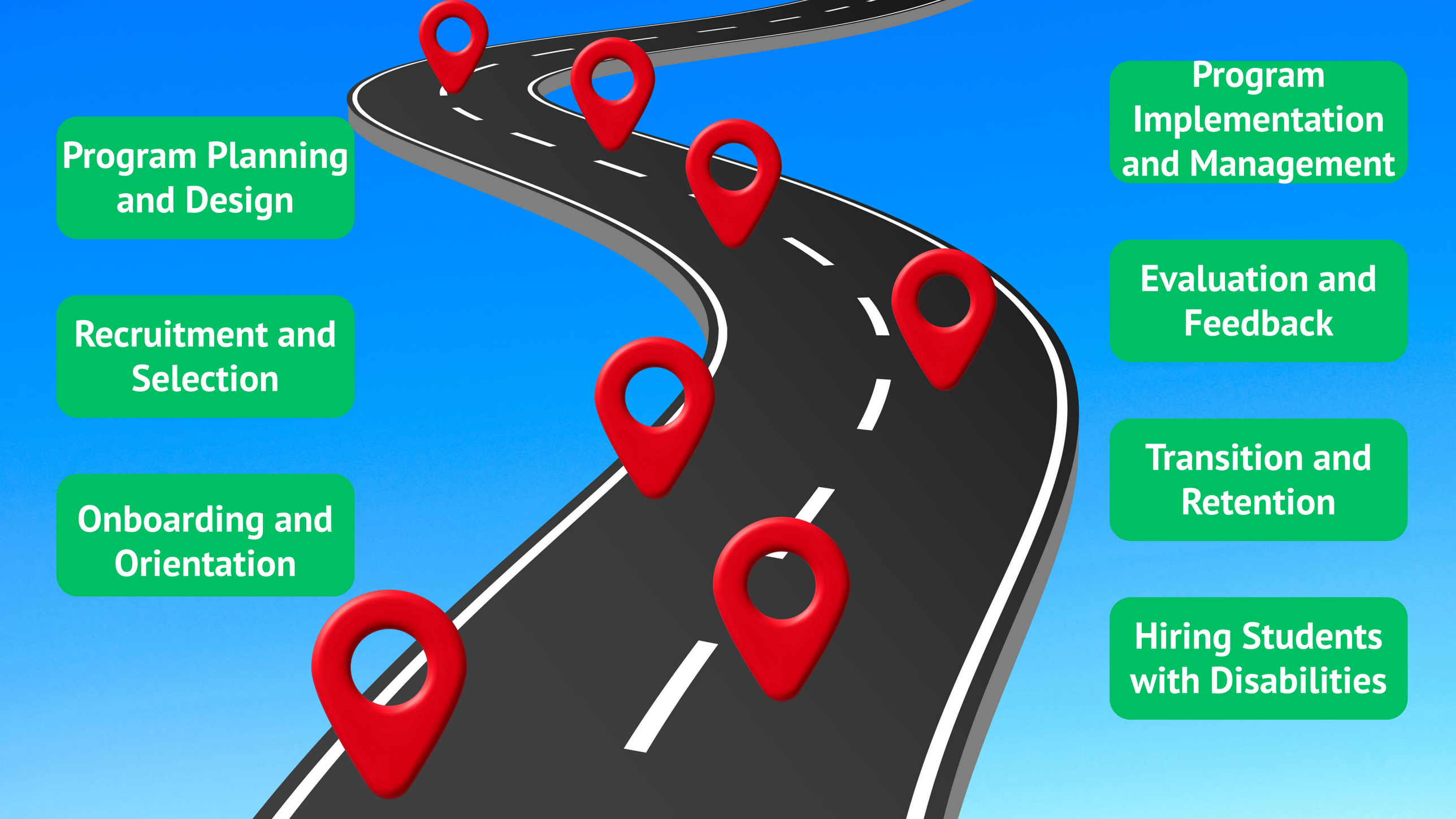
Outreach and Marketing

- Promote the WBL program through job fairs, educational institutions, online platforms, and industry events
- Highlight the benefits of the program for participants
  - Hands-on experience
  - Potential for permanent employment

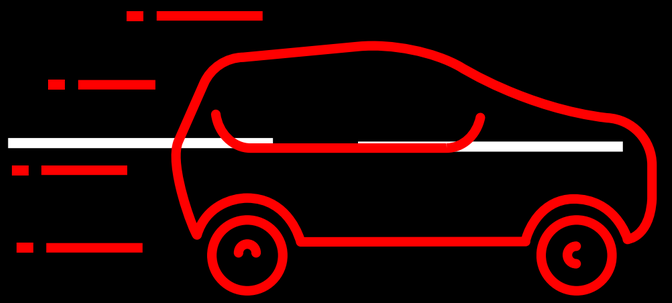
Recruitment and Selection

Selection Process

- Implement a fair transparent selection process, including applications, interviews, and assessments
- Involve key stakeholders in the selection process
  - HR
  - Department Heads


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Onboarding and Orientation



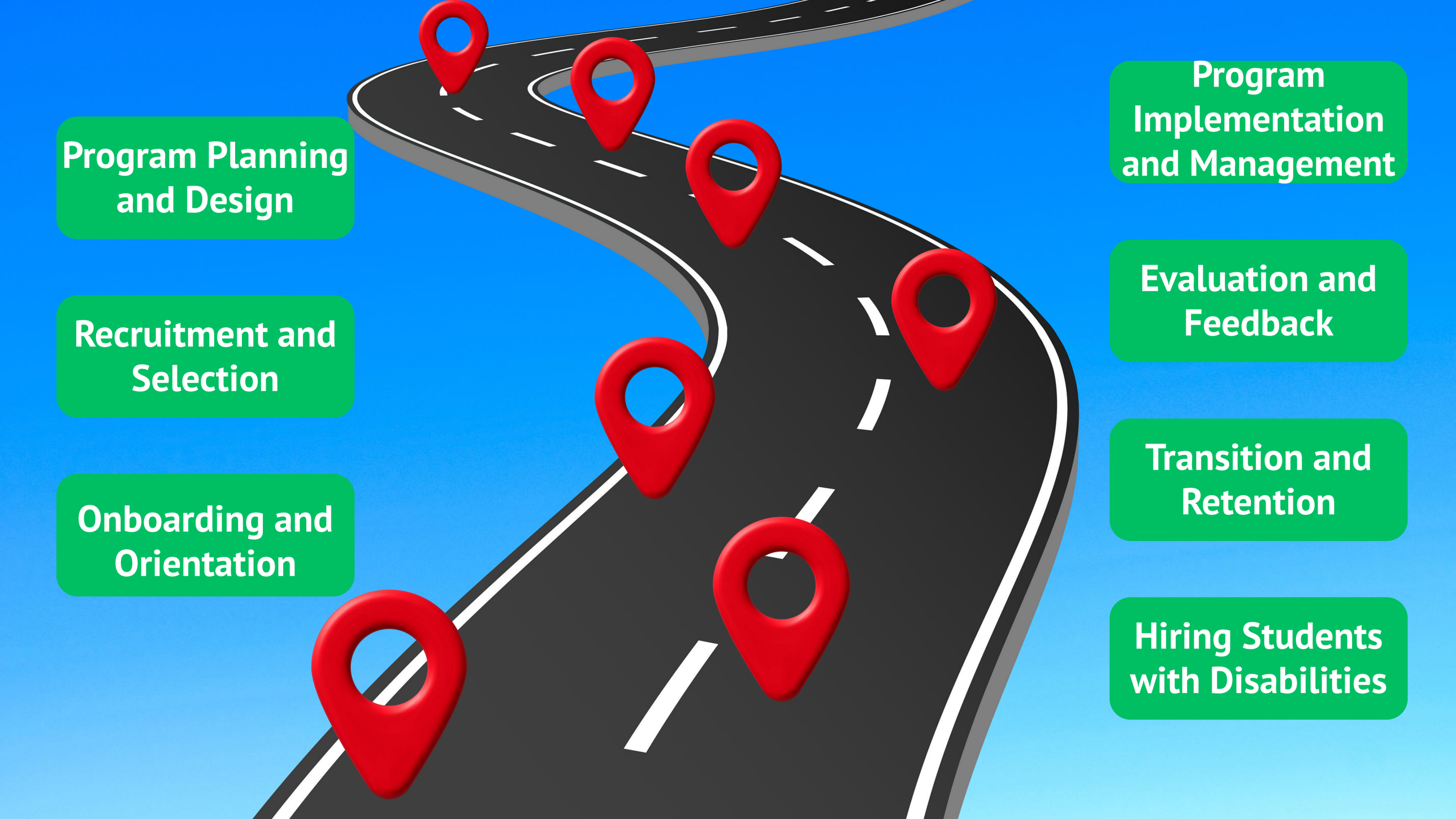
Welcome and Introduction

- Provide a comprehensive orientation to introduce participants to company culture, policies, and expectations
- Include tours, meet-and-greets with key staff, and overview of company operations.

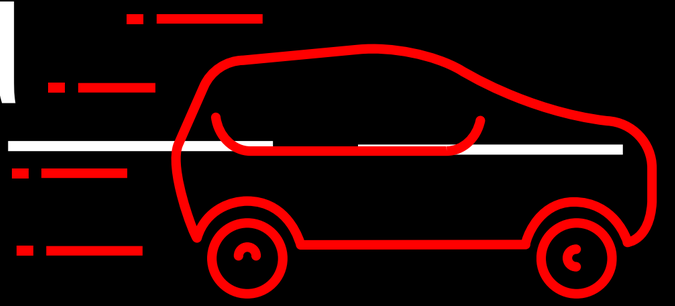
Onboarding and Orientation

Training and Development Plans

- Develop individual training plans that outline learning objectives, timelines, and evaluation methods
- Ensure access to necessary resources, tools, and supports


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Program Implementation and Management



Mentorship and Supervision

- Assign experienced mentors or supervisors to guide participants and provide regular feedback
- Encourage mentors to share knowledge, skills, and insights about the industry and company

Program Implementation and Management

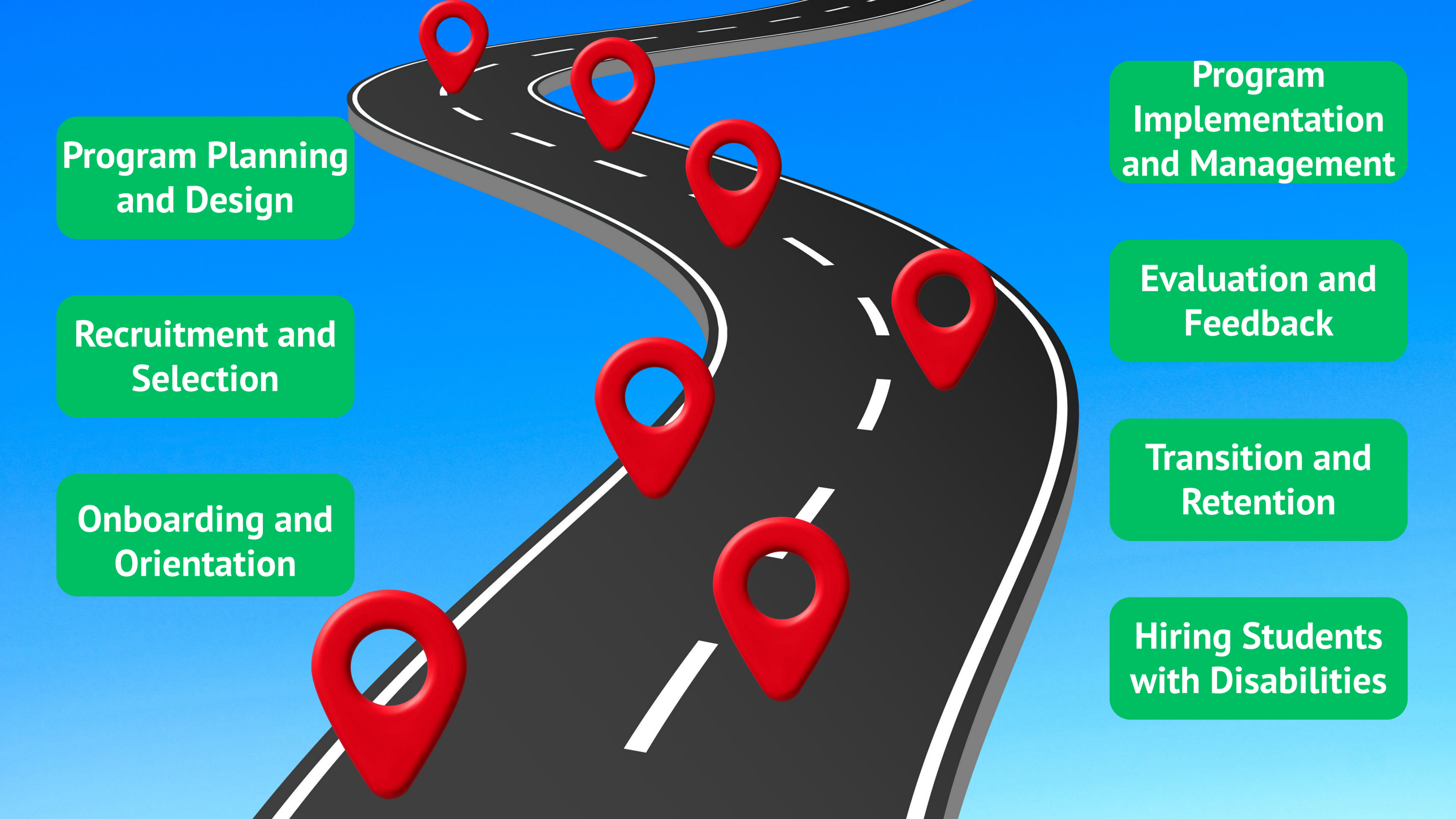
Hands-on Experience

- Ensure participants are engaged in meaningful work that contributes to their learning and development
- Rotate participants through different departments or projects to provide a well-rounded experience

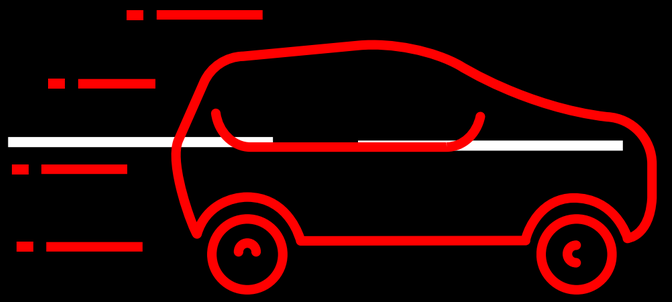
Program Implementation and Management

Skill Development

- Incorporate both technical skills and soft skills training
- Offer workshops, seminars, and online courses to supplement on-the-job learning


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Evaluation and Feedback



Performance Reviews

- Conduct regular performance evaluations to asses progress and identify areas for improvement
- Use a combination of self-assessments, mentor evaluations, and peer feedback

Evaluation and Feedback

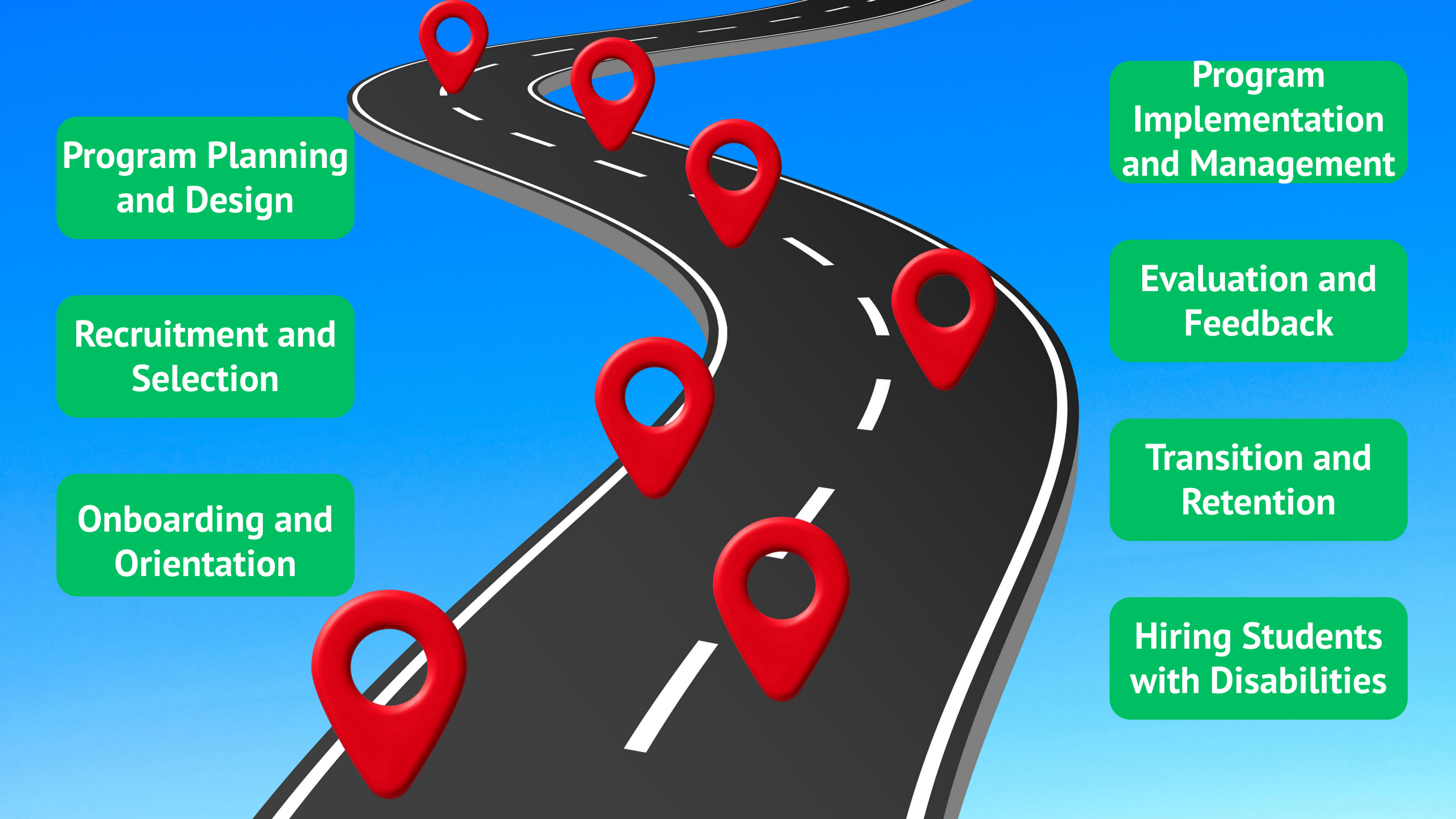
Feedback Mechanisms

- Create opportunities for participants to provide feedback on their experience
- Use surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings to gather insights

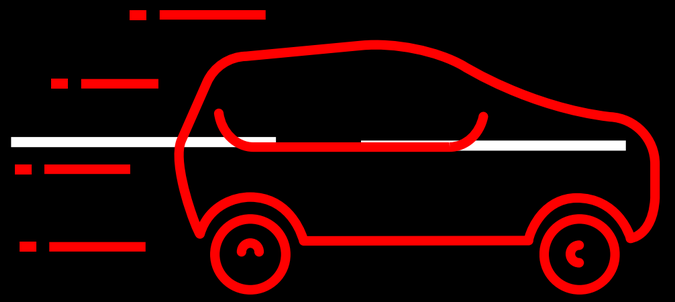
Evaluation and Feedback

Adjustments and Improvements

- Continuously refine the program based on feedback and evaluation results
- Stay adaptable to changing industry trends and organizational needs


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Transitions and Retention



Career Pathways

- Offer clear pathways for participants to transition into full-time roles within the company
- Provide information on available positions, required qualifications, and advancement opportunities

Transitions and Retention

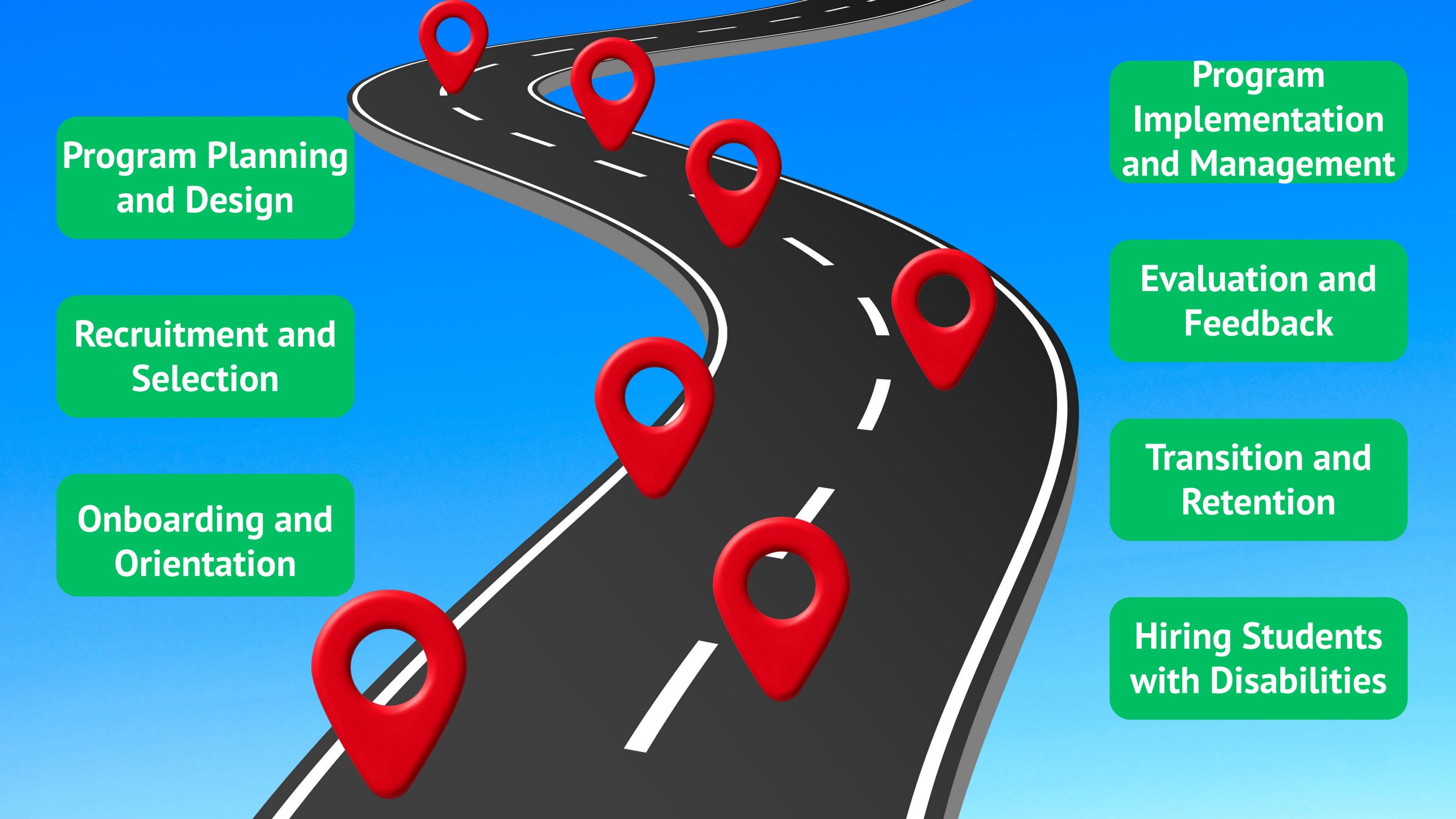
Retention Strategies

- Implement retention strategies such as competitive compensation, benefits, and career development opportunities
- Foster a positive work environment that encourages long-term commitment

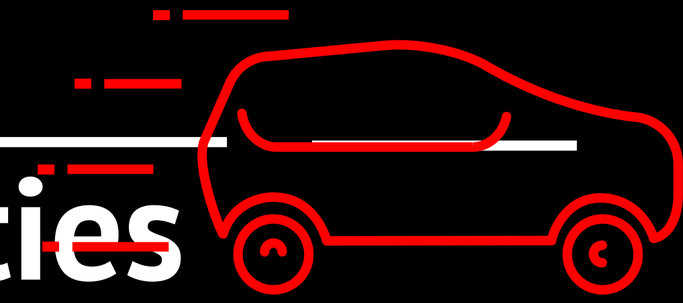
Transitions and Retention

Alumni Networks

- Maintain connections with program alumni to build a strong talent networks
- Offer ongoing professional development and networking opportunities


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities

Hiring Students with Disabilities



Employers should be aware of the following key components when working with students with disabilities:

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Disabilities are Diverse

- There is a wide range of disabilities, each with unique needs and challenges. Avoid making assumptions about a student's abilities based on their diagnosis. Instead, focus on their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Reasonable Accommodations - Employers are often required to provide reasonable accommodations to enable employees with disabilities to perform their job duties. These may include:

- Modified Work Schedules
- Assistive Technology
- Modified Workspaces
- Job Restructuring
- Alternative Training Methods
- Provide written/visual schedules of work activities

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Communication is Key

- Open and honest communication with the student and their support team is essential. Discuss their needs, strengths, and any accommodations they may require.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Training and Awareness

- Provide training to all employees on disability awareness, sensitivity, and how to interact with colleagues with disabilities. This can help create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Confidentiality

- Respect the student's privacy and confidentiality regarding their disability. Do not share information about their disability without their consent.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Collaboration with Support Services

- Work closely with the student's school service or other providers to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace. They can provide valuable insights and assistance in developing appropriate accommodations.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Focus on Abilities

- Emphasize the student's skills and abilities, rather than focusing on their limitations. This can help them feel more confident and valued as an employee.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

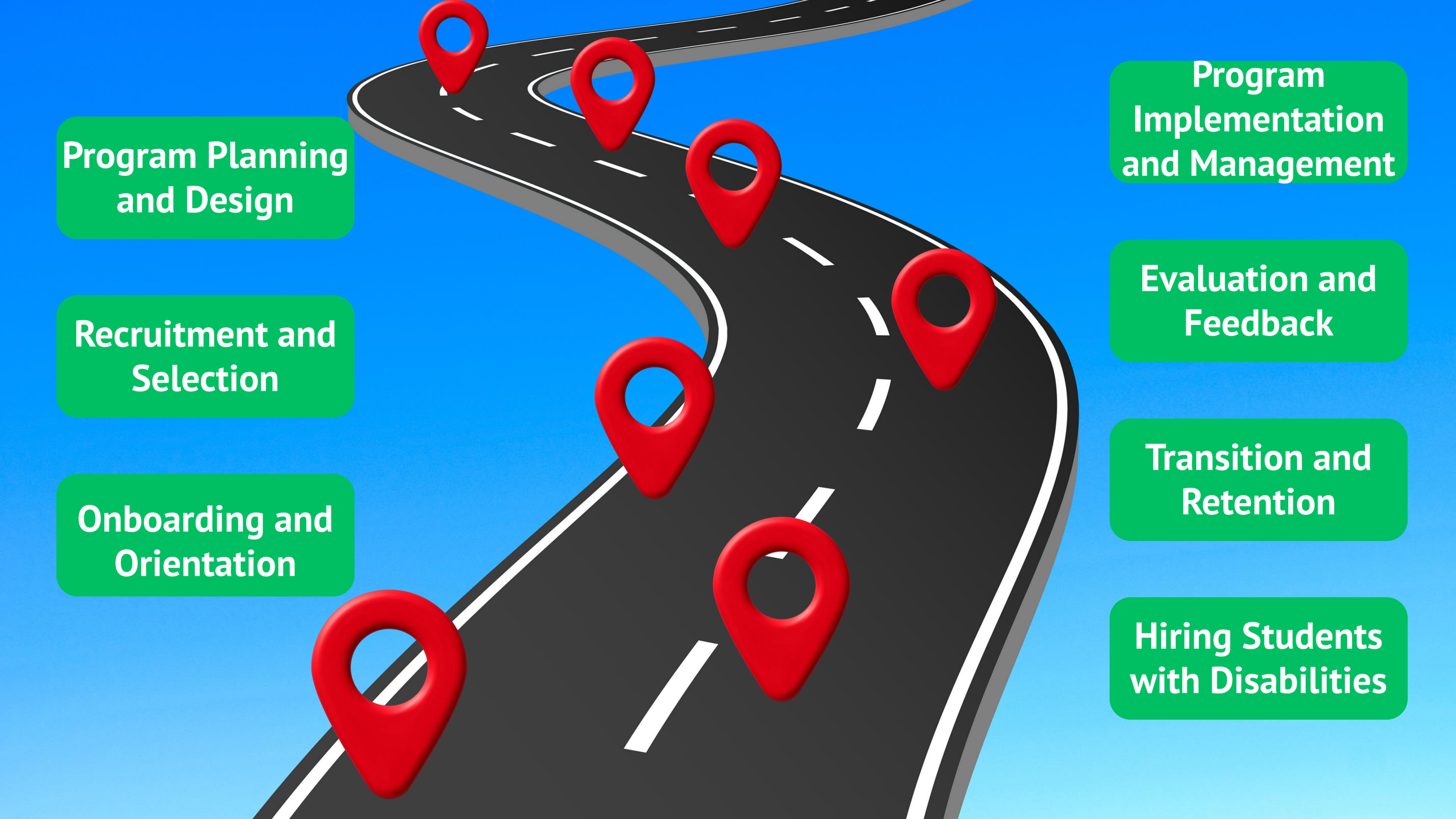
Ongoing Evaluation

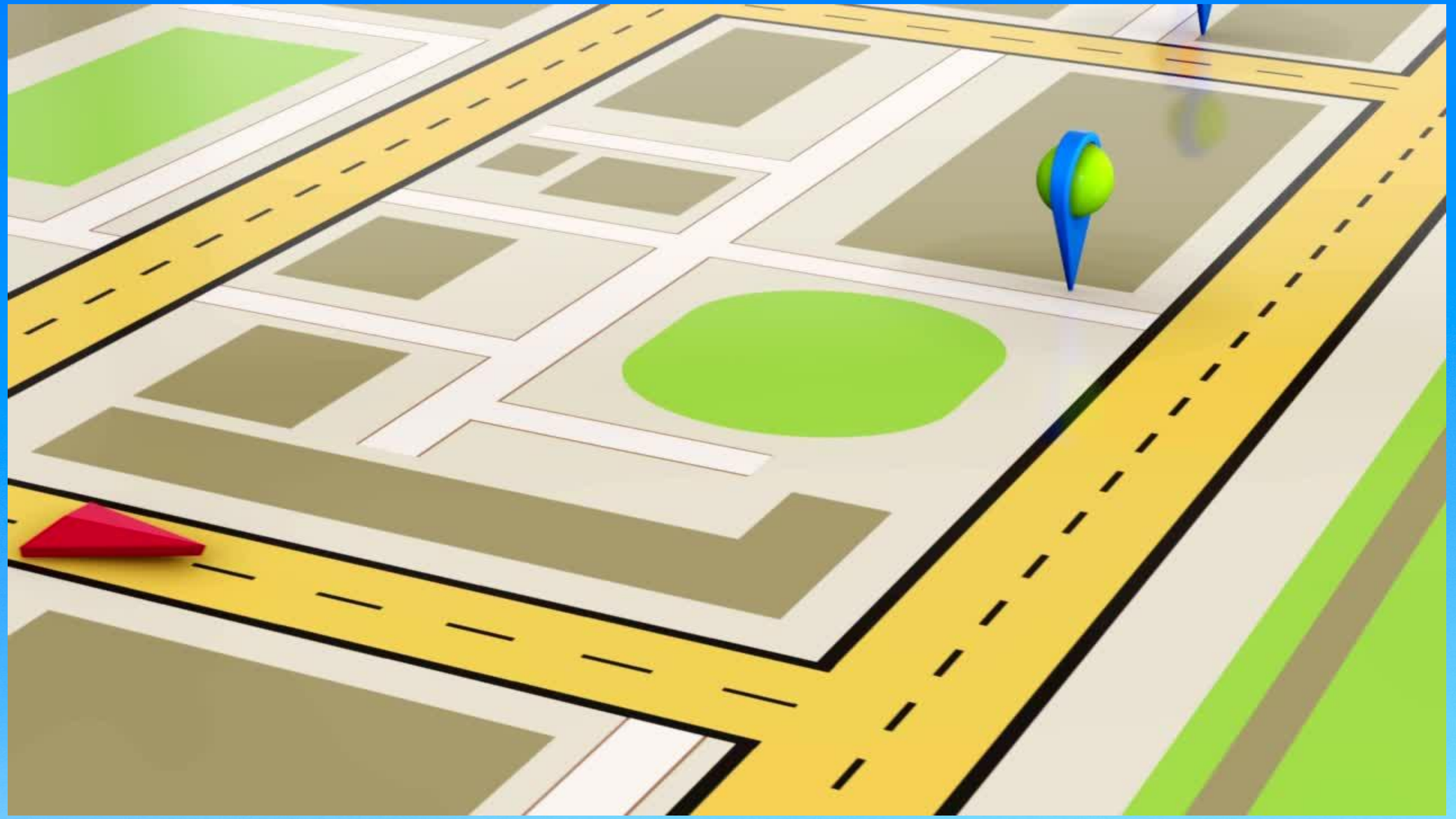
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of accommodations and make adjustments as needed. This ensures that the student continues to have the support they need to succeed in their role.

Hiring Students with Disabilities

Positive Attitude

- Approach the situation with a positive and supportive attitude. Believe in the student's abilities and create a welcoming and inclusive work environment.


Program Planning and Design
Recruitment and Selection
Onboarding and Orientation
Program Implementation and Management
Evaluation and Feedback
Transition and Retention
Hiring Students with Disabilities



For more information, please contact:

Emily Newsome, Career and Education Pathways Coordinator
Emily.newsome@netxworks.org
Northeast Texas Workforce Solutions Career and Education Pathways Initiative

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network

Equal Opportunity Employer/Programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request
Relay Texas:
800-735-2989 (TDD)
And 711 (Voice)