WASHINGTON STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
EDUCATION · OPPORTUNITY · RESULTS

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Olympia, Washington 98502
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wsac.wa.gov

LEARN Community of Practice
Local Education Adult Resource Network

January 14, 2025
12:00 – 1:30 PM

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Engaging: Small Group Networking
3. Learning: Guest Presenter – Education Strategy Group
4. Wrap Up

Meeting Schedule
Monthly, 90 minutes from 12:00 – 1:30 PM

- February 11, 2025
- March 11, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- May 13, 2025
- *June 10, 2025* potential in-person convening*

Information: https://wsac.wa.gov/LEARN
Contact: AdultPathways@wsac.wa.gov

Local Education Adult Resource Network (LEARN)
Community of Practice

January 14, 2025

Agenda

- Small Group Networking

- Guest Presenter: Education Strategy Group *Creating Strong Ecosystems for Adults and Working Learners*

- Wrap Up

Guest Presenters: Education Strategy Group

Christine Barrow, Ph.D.
Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Annie Phillips
Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Disraelly Cruz, Ph.D.
Associate Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Kailee Karr
Associate Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Small Group Networking, 20 minutes

- You will select the breakout room you want to attend.

- This is *networking*. You can move to different rooms at any time, as many times as you want.

- Use the first few minutes for introductions, or be sure to introduce yourself as you participate.
  - Who are you? What type of work do you do?

Breakout Room Topics
- Vision setting & policies
- Stakeholder engagement and student voice
- Creating career connected programs and pathways
- "Untopic"

Wrap Up

- Next session – February 11
  - Regional Challenge Grant Partnership Highlight: ELEVATE and Oly Co-Op

Contact email: adultpathways@wsac.wa.gov
Website: www.wsac.wa.gov/LEARN

Creating Strong Ecosystems to Support Adults & Working Learners

Washington Student Achievement Council

January 14, 2025

"

Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.

~Brene Brown, researcher and storyteller

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Objectives for Today

🎯 **Highlight** what we know about adults and working learners

🎯 **Elevate** elements of strong ecosystems for increasing credential attainment for adults and working learners

🎯 **Create** space to reflect, ideate, and learn

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Let's get started...

Who's in the room?

What did you want to be
when you were in high school?

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Christine Barrow
Director, Postsecondary Attainment

Wanted to be:
Astronaut *(start of high school)*...Medical doctor *(end of high school)*

Annie Phillips
Director, Postsecondary Attainment

Wanted to be:
Civil Engineer

Disraelly Cruz
Associate Director, Postsecondary Attainment

Wanted to be:
Criminal Defense Attorney

Kailee Karr
Associate, Postsecondary Attainment

Wanted to be:
Marine Biologist, Anthropologist

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Who We Are

Our mission is to work with America's education, business, and civic leaders to expand opportunity and **ensure economic mobility for all individuals by increasing educational attainment.**

We are driven by the conviction that **a high-quality education system aligned with workforce demand leads to a more prosperous and equitable society.**

Postsecondary Transitions

Postsecondary Attainment

Career Readiness

Talent Strategies

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POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT

The Challenges

- Attainment goals have helped **keep a focus on increasing credential completion**; however it has been **disconnected from economic development.**
- Labor market shifts have **increased pressure on adult learners** to seek postsecondary credentials and degrees for good jobs; however, **HE institutions are not designed to serve these learners well.**
- **Demand for non-degree credentials is growing** for both learners and employers; however, **systems to manage quality and transferability are lacking** so non-degree credential earners often end up in low-quality programs or can't count their prior learning towards a degree later in life.
- Students seek postsecondary credentials to advance in the labor market, yet **higher education historically does a poor job with helping learners understand their skills and bridging those skills to the workplace.**

Our Big Goal

Postsecondary credentials are growing in importance for labor market success, but higher education has been slow to meet cost and value concerns. ESG will strive to improve the value proposition by building the capacity of higher education to be engines of economic opportunity for learners, especially for traditionally underserved populations.

Postsecondary Attainment & Value

Engaging states and regions to set attainment goals connected to economic growth

Equitable Success for Adults

Expanding the adoption of best practices for adult learners across colleges and universities to close equity gaps

### Credentials Quality & Learning Portability

Creating conditions and tools to ensure credentials are more seamlessly integrated into the higher education ecosystem

College to Career Transitions

Support institutions and systems to better harness learning to ensure students have the skills to be successful in the workplace

Where We Work

★ Adult/Non-credit

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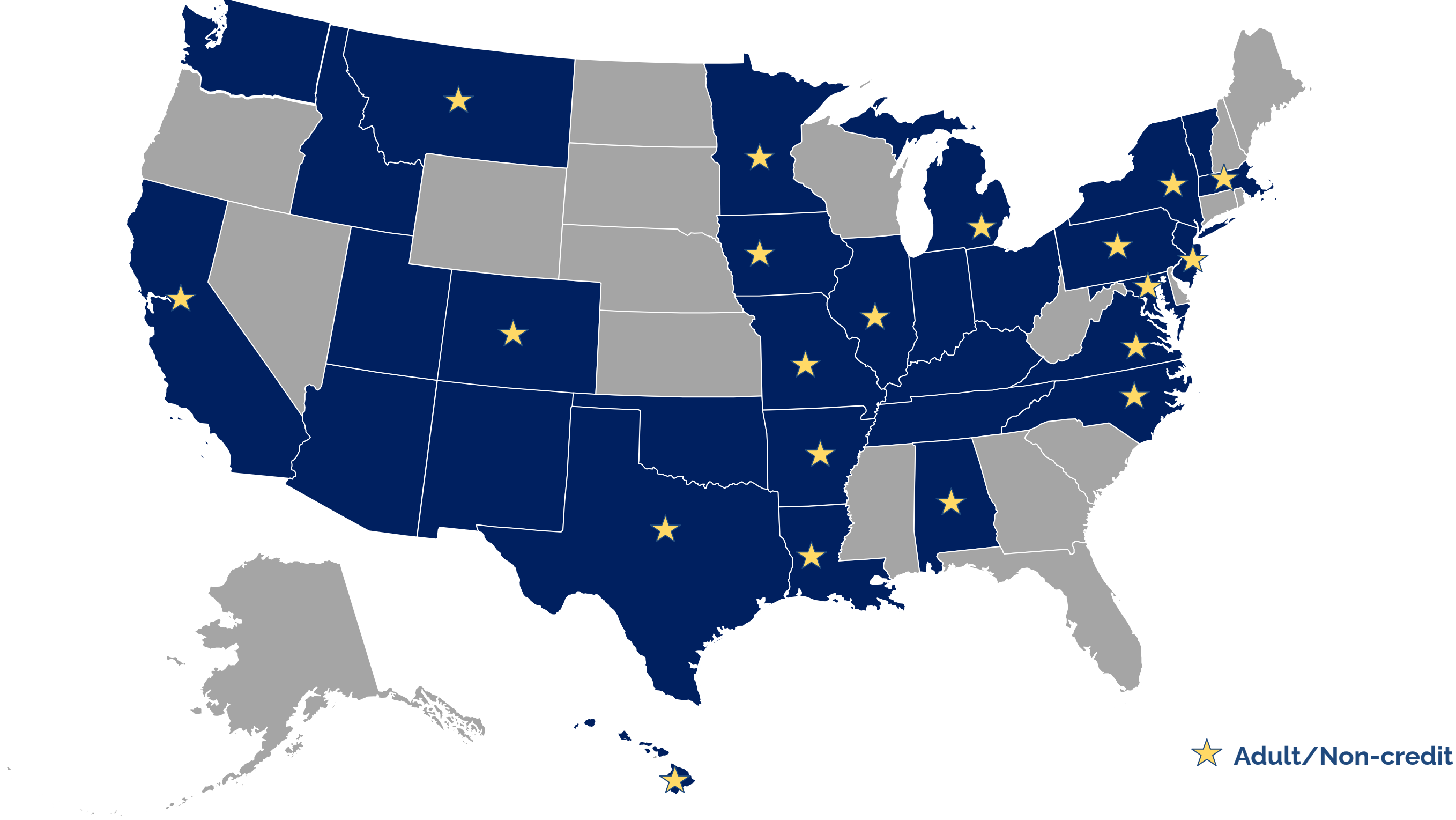
Let's Discuss!

Small Group Networking on the following topics:

1. Vision Setting & Policies
2. Stakeholder Engagement & Student Voice
3. Creating Career-Connected Programs and Pathways
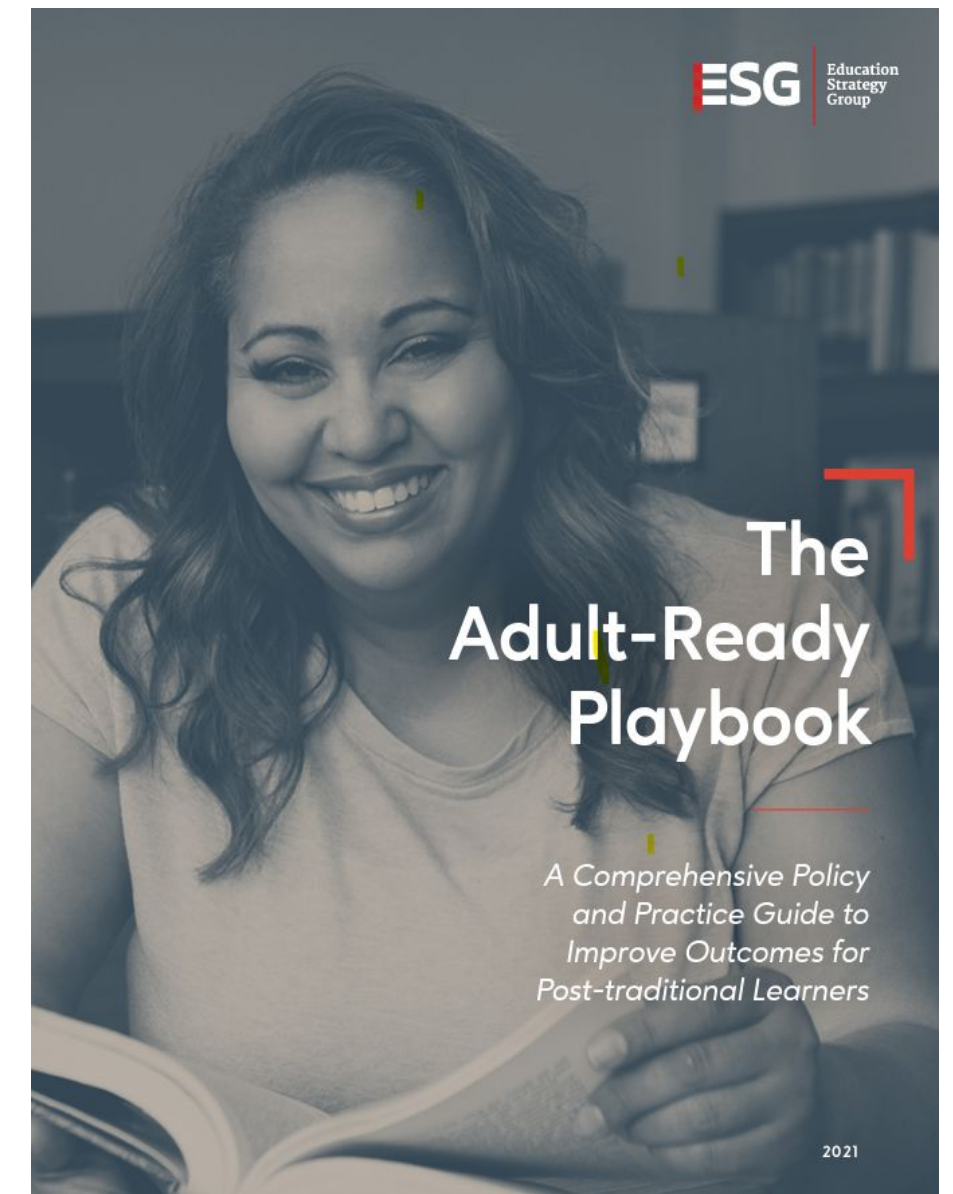4. "Un-topic"

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What do we know about adults & working learners?

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Defining Adult Learners

Adult learners tend to be defined as those at or over the age 25 beginning or restarting their path to their first credential

- **Nontraditional-learners** have one or more characteristics that are considered "non-traditional" in higher education
- **Post-traditional learner** is a term that offers more humanizing language and acknowledges that students with "nontraditional" characteristics are now the norm in postsecondary education.

Who do we mean by "adult"? Individuals with high school diploma or equivalency and are one year or more removed high school and, for data purposes, usually use 25 and older

The Adult-Ready Playbook

A Comprehensive Policy and Practice Guide to Improve Outcomes for Post-traditional Learners

2021

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The Diverse and Multifaceted Adult Learner

Degree or certificate holders

GED holders

Skill-Seeking

Some college, No Degree (SCND)

Perhaps the tie that binds this diverse population of learners together most aptly is a *nearly universal desire to strive for themselves and their families.*

Parents

Veterans

Immigrants

Justice-impacted

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Today's Learners

64% work with 40% working full time

49% are financially independent

24% have children

Lumina Foundation: Today's Student

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Educating Today's Learners

Acknowledge that adult and working learners face significant barriers – many that are rooted in **systemic and historic structures.**

Aim to address these issues with **holistic strategies** tailored to these learners, such as reforming financial aid and admissions processes.

Consider **deeper systemic change** to truly dismantle these barriers.
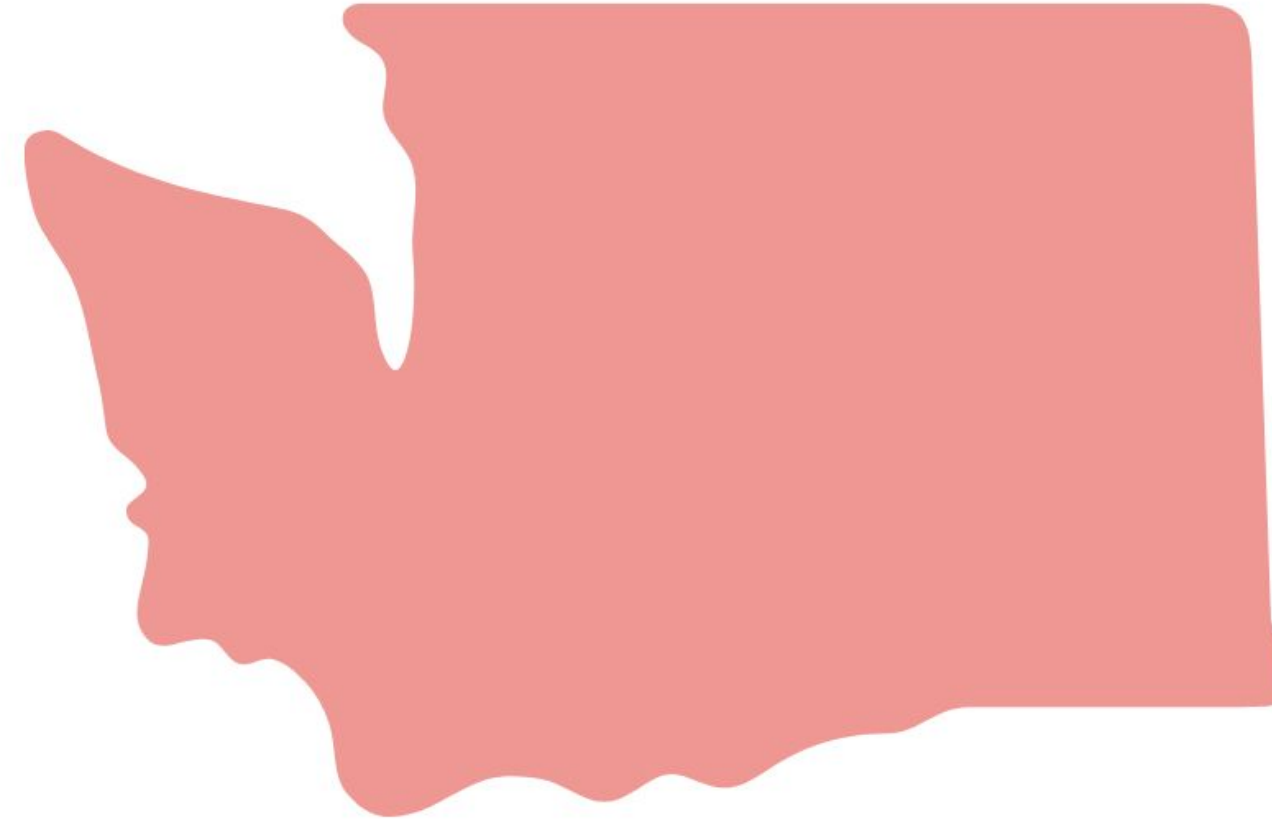
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Considerations Beyond the Number

Reskillers

Upskillers

Earners

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WA Context

1.1 million Washington state students have "Some College, No Credential" according to 2022 National Student Clearinghouse data [1]

Washington's high school graduation rates **continue to rise** however the state's direct enrollment rate from high school to postsecondary institutions **dropped nine percentage points** between 2019 and 2021 [2]

1 2022 National Student Clearinghouse data
2 *Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) High School Graduate Outcomes Dashboard*
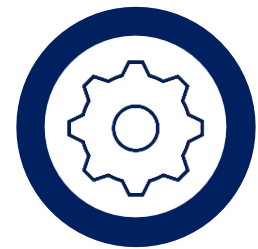
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Priorities for Adult-Ready Transformation

ACCESSIBILITY: Post-traditional learners effectively access and move through postsecondary programs.

PROGRAM CHANGE: Post-traditional learners thrive and feel engaged within postsecondary classrooms.

OPERATIONAL CHANGE: Post-traditional learners easily navigate postsecondary advising and administrative systems.
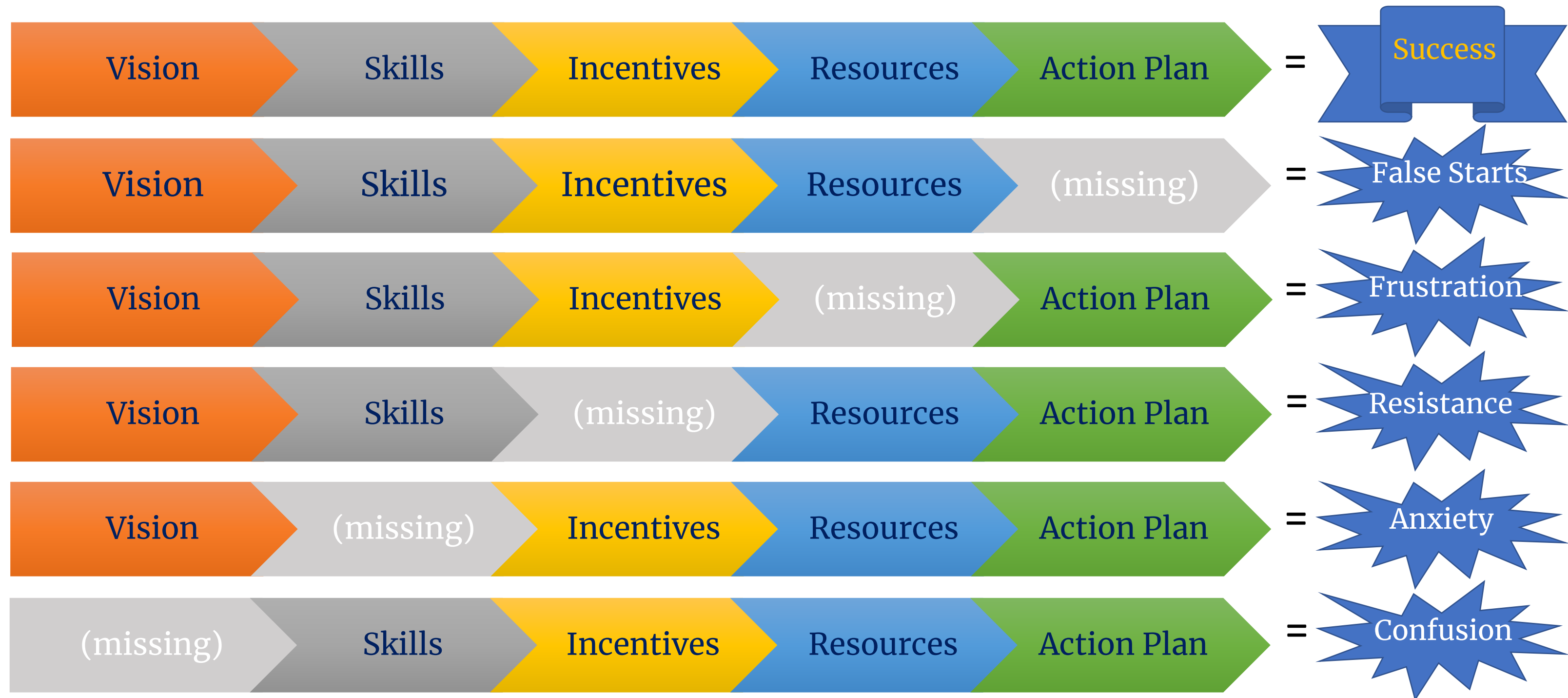
DATA: Post-traditional learners are authentically measured through data and used as a subject for ongoing improvement.

PARTNERSHIPS: Post-traditional learners seamlessly interface between higher education systems and trusted community/industry partners.

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Vision/Goal Setting & Policy

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Managing Complex Change

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Success
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	(missing)	=	False Starts
Vision	Skills	Incentives	(missing)	Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	Skills	(missing)	Resources	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	(missing)	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
(missing)	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Confusion

Adapted from Knoster, T. (1991) Presentation to TASH Conference, Washington, D.C. Adapted by Knoster from Enterprise Group, Ltd.

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Missouri Adult Learner Operationalization Plan

- Strong Collaboration
  - Missouri Department of Higher Education
  - Missouri College and Career Attainment Network

- Align multiple state assets related to adult learners
  - Create cohesive operationalization plan
  - Clear tactics and collaborators
  - Coaching

MOCAN
MISSOURI COLLEGE &
CAREER ATTAINMENT NETWORK

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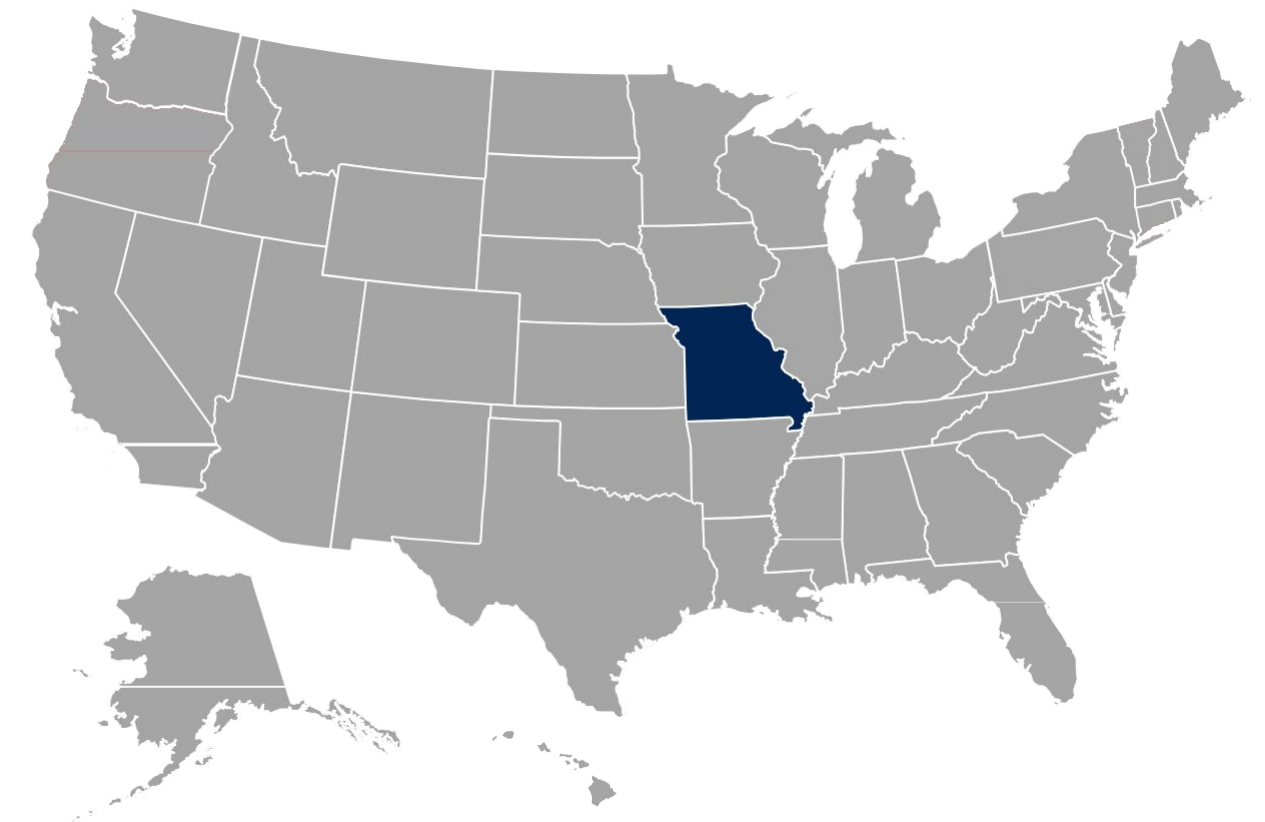
Noncredit Mobility Academy

- SHEEO Association
  - ESG, Progressive Policy Institute

- Goals/Expected Outcomes
  - State-level **taxonomy** for noncredit programs
  - Plan to build or improve upon noncredit **data collection and reporting**
  - Funding recommendations to support or **incentivize enrollment and transitions** in pathways
  - **Communication** plan to inform state constituencies about who enrolls in noncredit education and the opportunities for economic mobility

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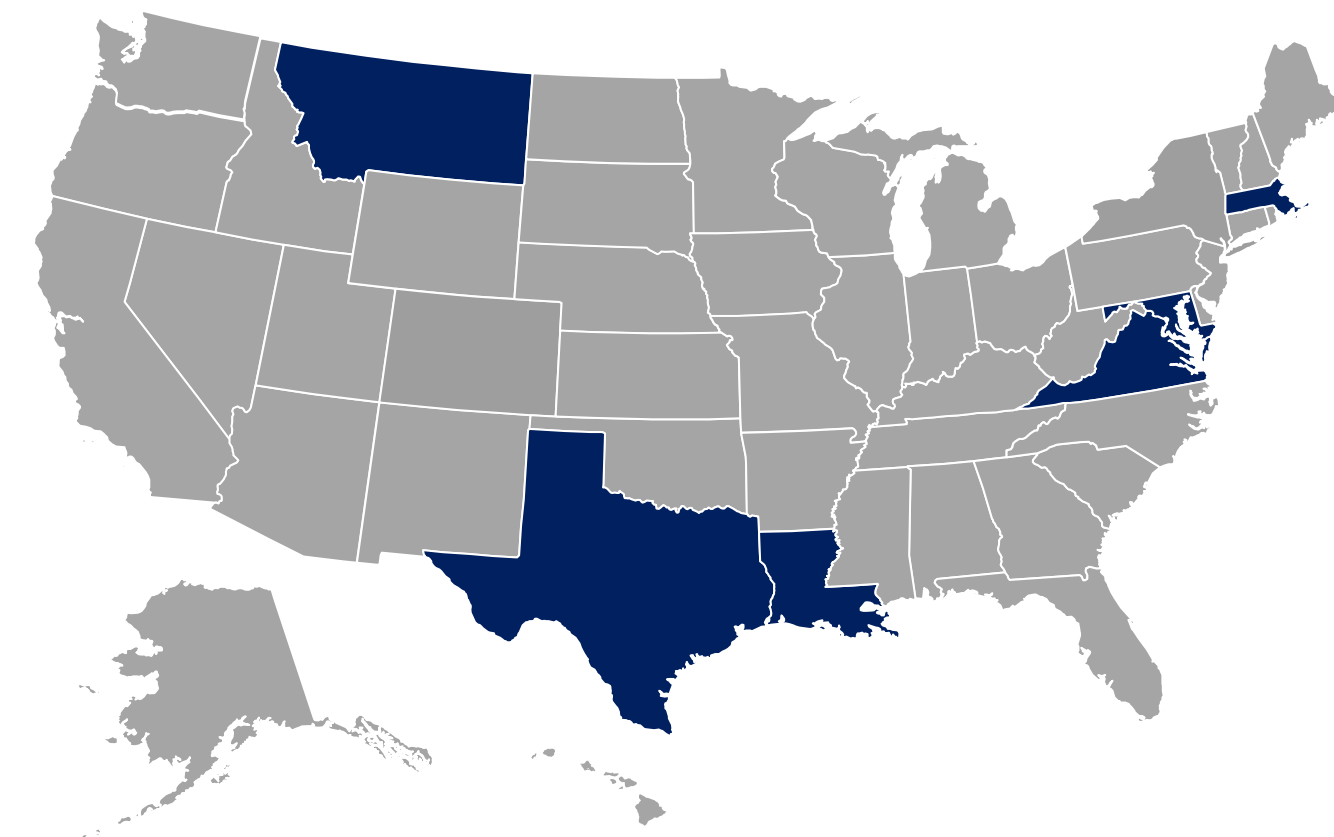
Comprehensive Approach

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Let's Discuss!

Click the Miro link in the chat

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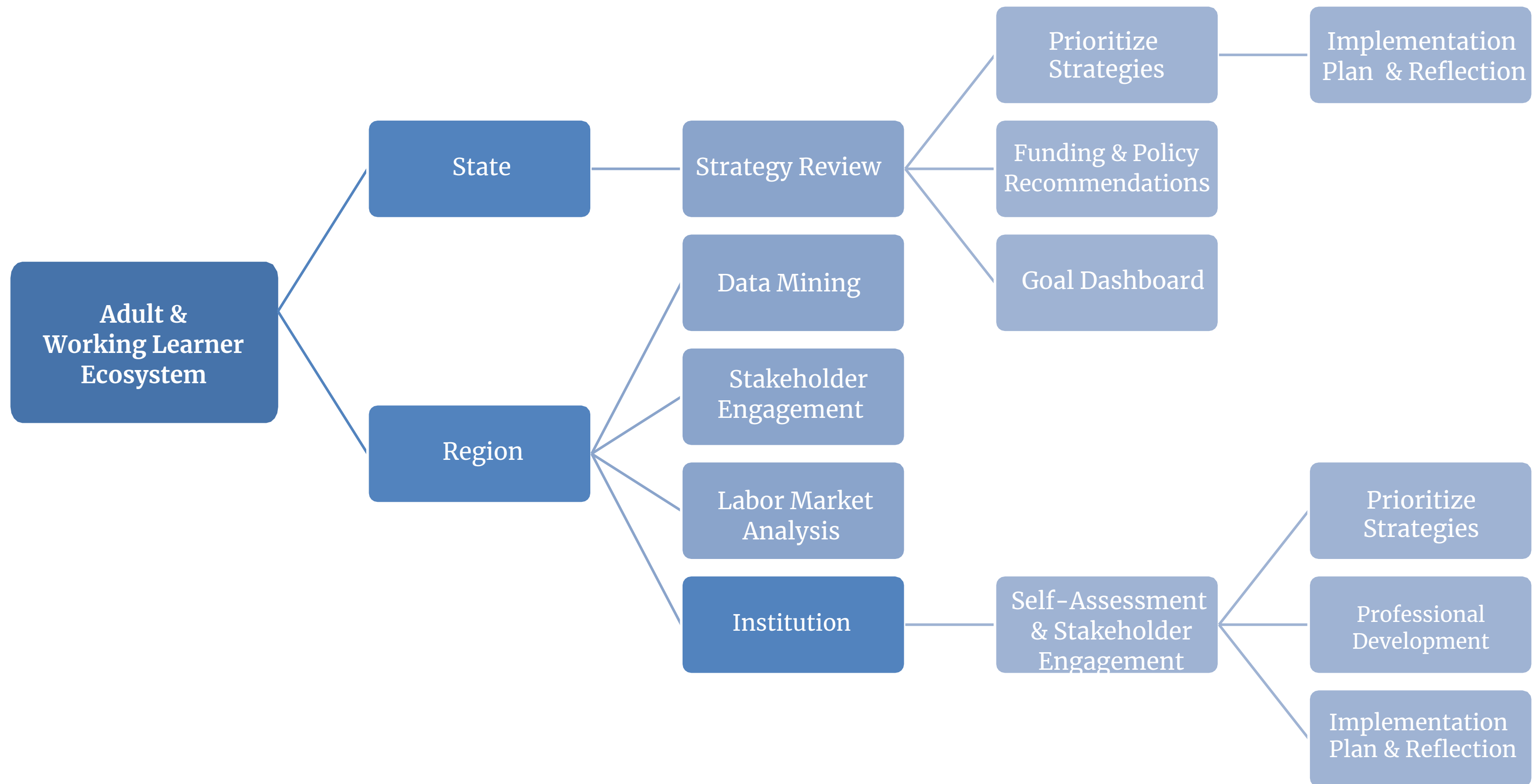
Creating Career-Connected Programs & Pathways

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REACH Collaborative

- Lumina Foundation
  - ESG, Lead, Project mgmt, Adult SME
  - University of Pittsburgh, Co-Lead and Equity SME
  - DVP PRAXIS LTD, Learning & Evaluation
  - Friday, Comms

- Three Pillars
  - Credentials to Degrees Alignment
  - Bundling and Sequencing Supports
  - Culturally Sustaining Practices

- 6 States, nearly 140 Community Colleges

REACH
collaborative

RACIAL EQUITY for **ADULT CREDENTIALS** in **HIGHER ED**

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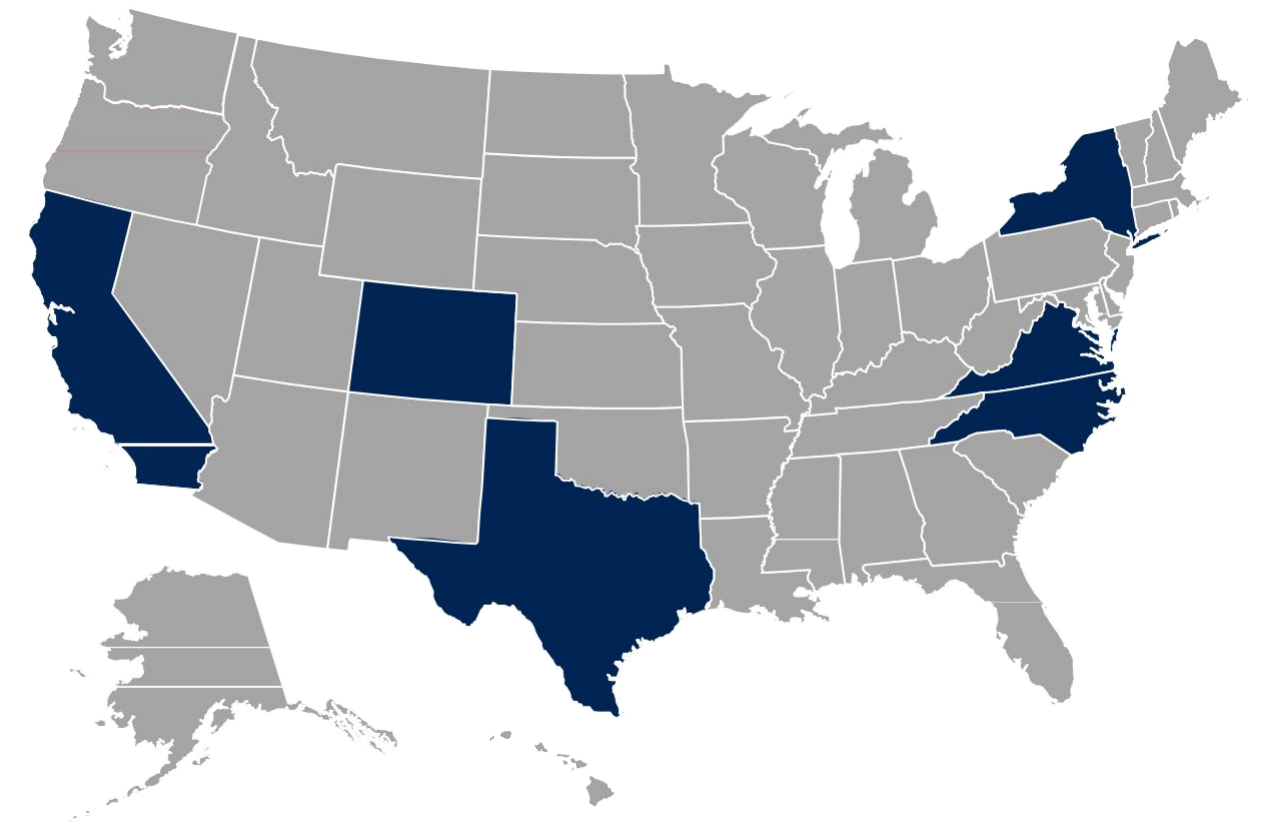
What are the
in-demand industries
in your area?

Within those
industries, what are
the in-demand
occupations?

Does the occupation
provide a living wage
or high wage?

What are the credentials associated with these occupations?

What are the instructional programs associated
with these occupations and credentials?

What is the enrollment by demographic for
these instructional programs?

**Pathways
identification
funnel**

What are the institutional and regional
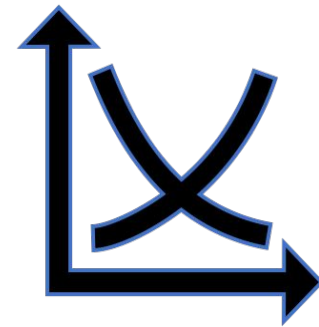contextual factors?

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Data Drives Credentials of Value Identification
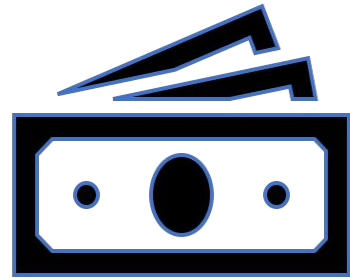
Wage Threshold:

Wage thresholds are calculated using the MIT Living Wage Calculator for the hourly income required to support a family with two working adults and two children in each state or region.

+

Demand Threshold:
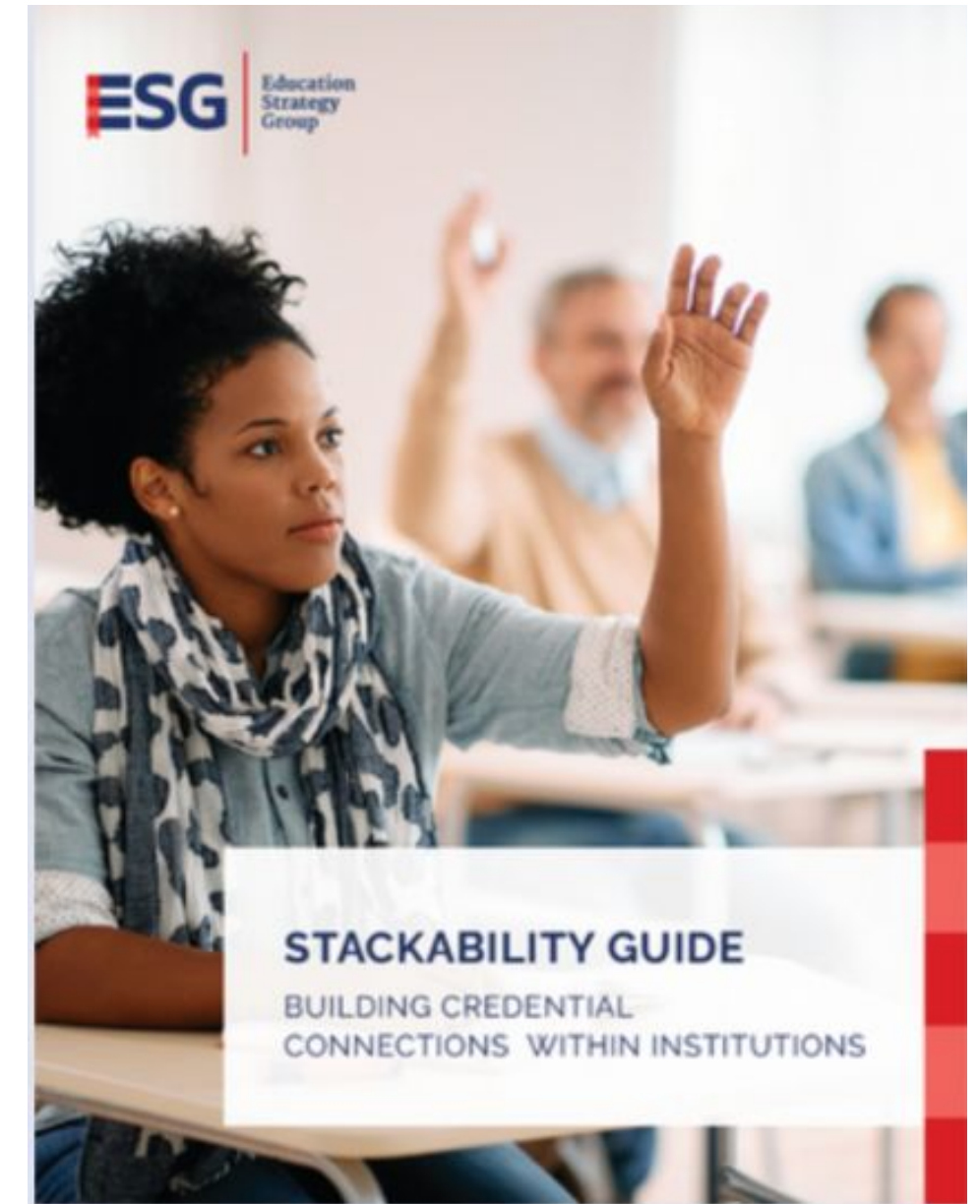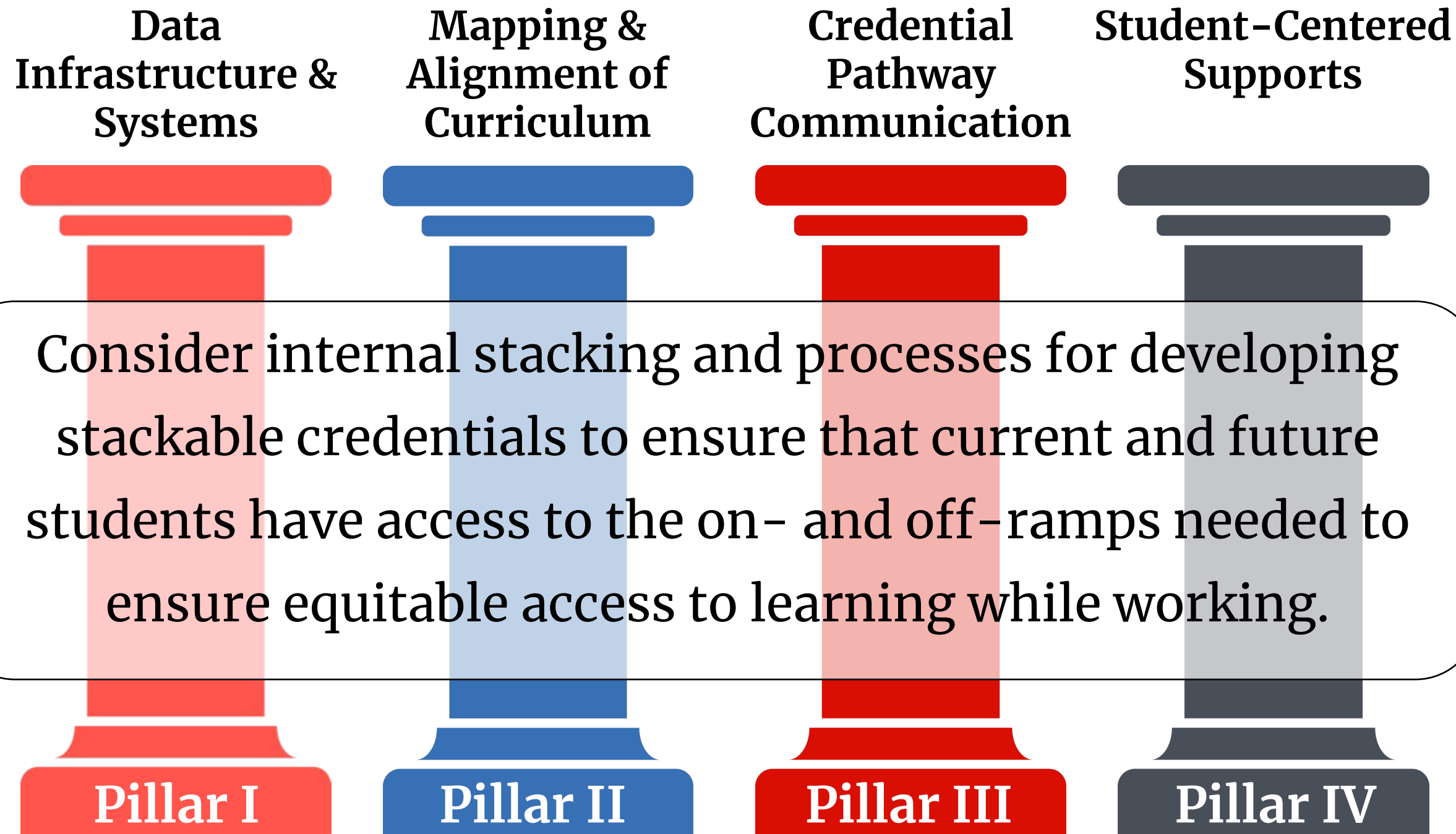
Demand Thresholds are set based on the average number of annual openings for all occupations in a state.

+

Growth Threshold:

Growth thresholds are determined by the average percent of projected growth across all occupations.

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Stackability & Learning Recognition

Data Infrastructure & Systems

Mapping & Alignment of Curriculum

Credential Pathway Communication

Student-Centered Supports

Consider internal stacking and processes for developing stackable credentials to ensure that current and future students have access to the on- and off-ramps needed to ensure equitable access to learning while working.

Pillar I

Pillar II

Pillar III

Pillar IV

ESG | Education Strategy Group

STACKABILITY GUIDE

BUILDING CREDENTIAL
CONNECTIONS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

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Let's Discuss!

Click the Miro link in the chat

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Stakeholder Engagement

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Strong Ecosystems Rely on Stakeholder Engagement

Based on your role, **who do you see as key stakeholders**?

Vision

What visions for the future of adult learners do various stakeholders have?

What aspects of the adult learner experience, most in need of improvement, should be prioritized?

How can you encourage and support credential programs to expand and improve the quality of credential alignment?
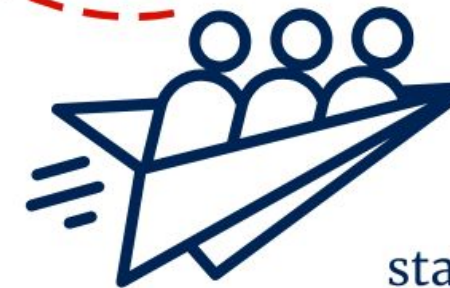
Alignment

How do various stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of current access to and quality of credentials?

How well do the current credential programs align with workforce development needs?

What are the key barriers or challenges hindering greater alignment with workforce needs and consistency in credit transfer?

Where are bright spots of effective credential alignment and learning recognition, and in the state? What factors contribute to their success?

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Community Based Organizations (CBO)

- Great Jobs KC (GJKC) began as a college access/scholarship organization, and has grown to offer connections to over 70 job training programs, community resources, and life skills workshops

- Each Scholar is assigned a "Scholar Advocate" who acts as a mentor to combat imposter syndrome and as a connection to community resources

- GJKC is **rooted in the community** – they utilize a fully community-run board as well as local community reviewers for scholarship applications

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Student Voice

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Noncredit and Credit Alignment Lab (NCAL)

TREAT ALL STUDENTS AS STUDENTS 1

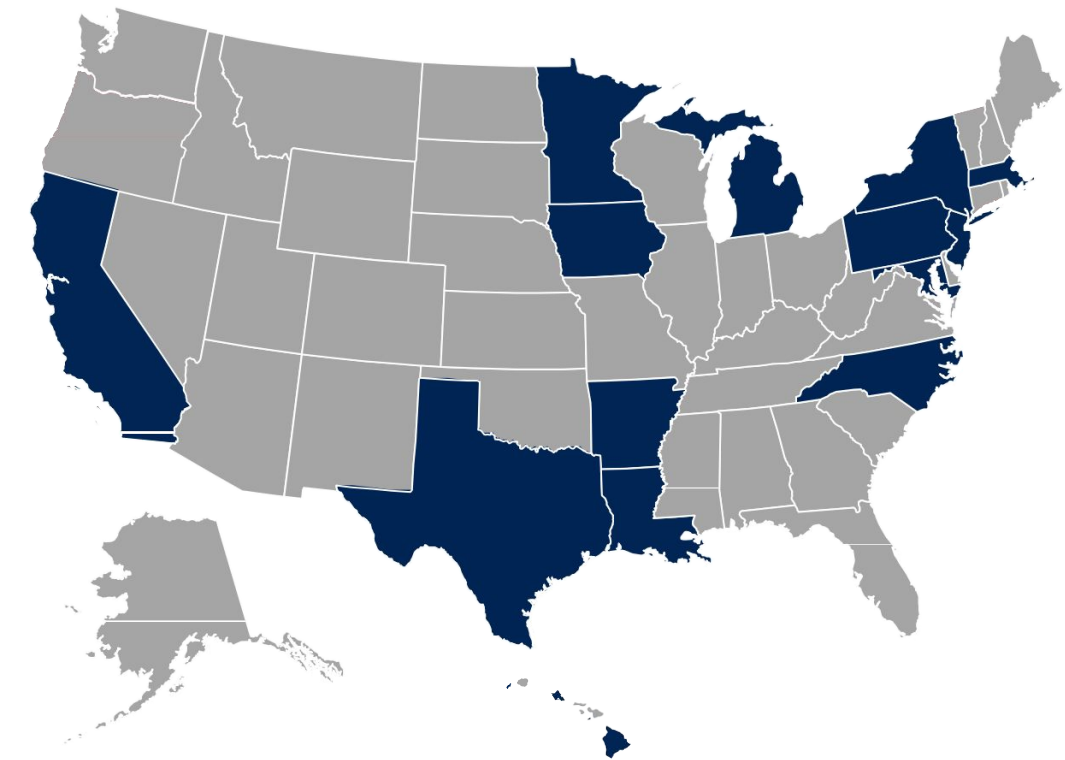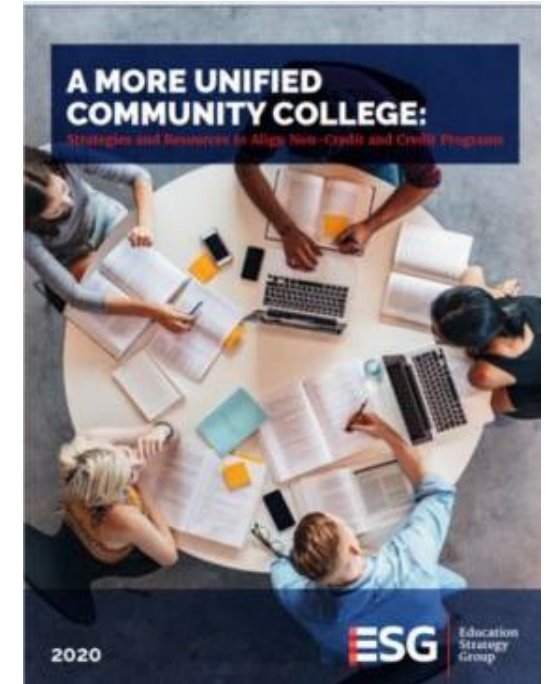**BUILD PATHWAYS BETWEEN NON-CREDIT & CREDIT CREDENTIALS** 2

ALIGN DEPARTMENTS & GOVERNANCE 3

MAKE PROGRAMS CREDIT-WORTHY OR CREDIT-BASED 4
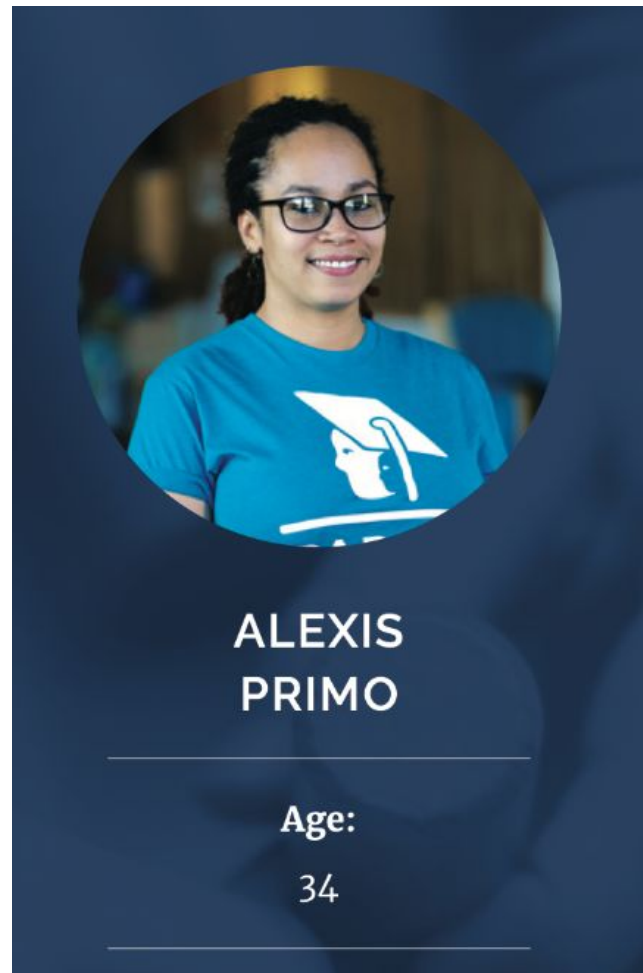
REMOVE BARRIERS TO TRANSITION 5

- 14 Community College Governance Units
  - 20 colleges

A MORE UNIFIED COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Strategies and Resources to Align Non-Credit and Credit Programs

ESG Education Strategy Group

2020

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Going to the Source

ALEXIS
PRIMO

Age:
34

AMY
WEST

Age:
47

Noncredit and Credit Alignment Lab

- What are your plans for the future?

- Why did you enroll in a non-credit program?

- What prompted you to transition to a credit program?

- Was it difficult to transition from a non-credit program to a credit program?

- What recommendations do you have to faculty and staff who are working to improve the student experience across non-credit and credit?

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Let's Discuss!

Click the Miro link in the chat

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Let's Review...Recap

- Adults and working learners are multifaceted and defined beyond age

- Start with a clear vision and align policies, processes, and practices

- Ecosystem work happens at all levels: state, region, and institution

- Career-connected pathways center on credentials of value that align noncredit and credit, recognize learning, and stack

- Stakeholders include workforce entities, employers, CBOs, social services, and more

- **Continuous feedback...Listen to the current, former, and prospective students!**

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Contact Us

- **Christine Barrow**
  cbarrow@edstrategy.org

- **Annie Phillips**
  aphillips@edstrategy.org

- **Disraelly Cruz**
  dcruz@edstrategy.org

- **Kailee Karr**
  kkarr@edstrategy.org

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Thank you!

ESG Team Headshots and Brief Bios

Christine Barrow, Ph.D., Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Christine Barrow serves as the director of postsecondary attainment for Education Strategy Group (ESG), where she advances collaborative, evidence-based postsecondary initiatives toward improving student outcomes and eliminating equity gaps. Christine has over 20 years of experience creating the programs and strategic partnerships that transform learner paths to the workforce. Prior to joining ESG, Christine served as an accomplished community college educator and administrator. During her tenure as faculty and Dean for the STEM Division, she led key institutional elements of Guided Pathways implementation, credit/non-credit organizational and credential alignment, and student success program development. She led complex, regional partnerships of local school systems, higher education institutions, community organizations, and employer partners. Christine earned her Ph.D. from Howard University and her Bachelor's degree from Tuskegee University.

Annie Phillips, Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Annie Phillips is a Director at Education Strategy Group (ESG). At ESG, Annie leads numerous projects and initiatives to increase the number of students attaining postsecondary credentials that lead to meaningful careers. She has helped leaders in North Carolina design and launch a new non-profit, myFutureNC, to align, coordinate and sustain efforts across the state to meet its goal of "2 million by 2030," and leaders in Detroit, Michigan develop a Talent Masterplan to meet

the unique needs of their learners and employers. Through a collaboration with SHEEO, she has helped design, implement and facilitate a multi-state academy that provides strategic assistance to states to build or strengthen plans to meet attainment goals. Prior to ESG, Annie served as a Research Assistant at Jobs for the Future and as an administrator at LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York.

Disraelly Cruz, Ph.D., Associate Director of Postsecondary Attainment

Disraelly Cruz serves as associate director for postsecondary attainment at Education Strategy Group (ESG). Prior to joining ESG, Disraelly served as the Director of Planning and Policy for the State University System of Florida's Board of Governors, where she worked with government and university partners to review academic degree proposals, develop and update regulations on academic matters, and implement legislative policy on mathematics pathways, civics literacy, and other academic matters. Part of her duties also included reviewing university strategic plans, annual accountability plans, legislative budget requests, and quarterly spending reports for Pillars of Excellence initiatives. Previously, she was an assistant professor at the University of West Florida where she taught various classes in communication and conducted research on work-life balance and volunteering. Disraelly holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Communication from the University of Missouri where her dissertation focused on role management theory, volunteers, and work-life balance. Her work on expanding role management theory has been published in Human Relations.

Kailee Karr, Associate of Postsecondary Attainment

Kailee Karr serves as an associate for postsecondary attainment at Education Strategy Group (ESG). Prior to ESG, Kailee worked at Great Jobs KC (GJKC), a workforce development and college access non-profit that serves the people of Kansas City by creating pipelines to family sustaining careers. Hired originally as the Adult Learner Success Manager, she increased the applications for the Adult Learner Scholarship by 284% in one cycle through strategic policy review and by creating a bespoke community outreach campaign. In that role, Kailee supported over 2,500 need-based scholarship recipients, and collaborated with a network of 11 community colleges to do so. Additionally, she has experience working at Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City as the Career Services Coordinator where she supported over 2,000 students in career acquisition and built employer partnerships for the institution. Kailee was recently named an Equity Champion by the Missouri College Attainment Network for her steadfast commitment to supporting equitable outcomes in postsecondary attainment.