


MICRO-PATHWAYS, MACRO IMPACT: REIMAGINING ACCESS, EQUITY, AND EMPLOYABILITY



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Education Design Lab



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Micro-Pathways, Macro Impact: *Reimagining Access, Equity, and Employability*

June 4, 2025





Presenters



Dr. Rachel Kahn

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Michael Macklin

*Associate Vice Chancellor for Workforce Solutions,
Colorado Community College System*





Agenda

- Welcome + Introductions
- The Lab + Community College Growth Engine Overview
- The Colorado Community College System + Behavioral Health
- Fireside Chat
- Wrap-up + Close

Education Design Lab

**Designing
Education Toward
the Future of Work**



Who We Are

Education Design Lab (the Lab) is a 12-year old national nonprofit dedicated to driving the nation's shift towards an equitable skills-based economy.

Our mission is to...

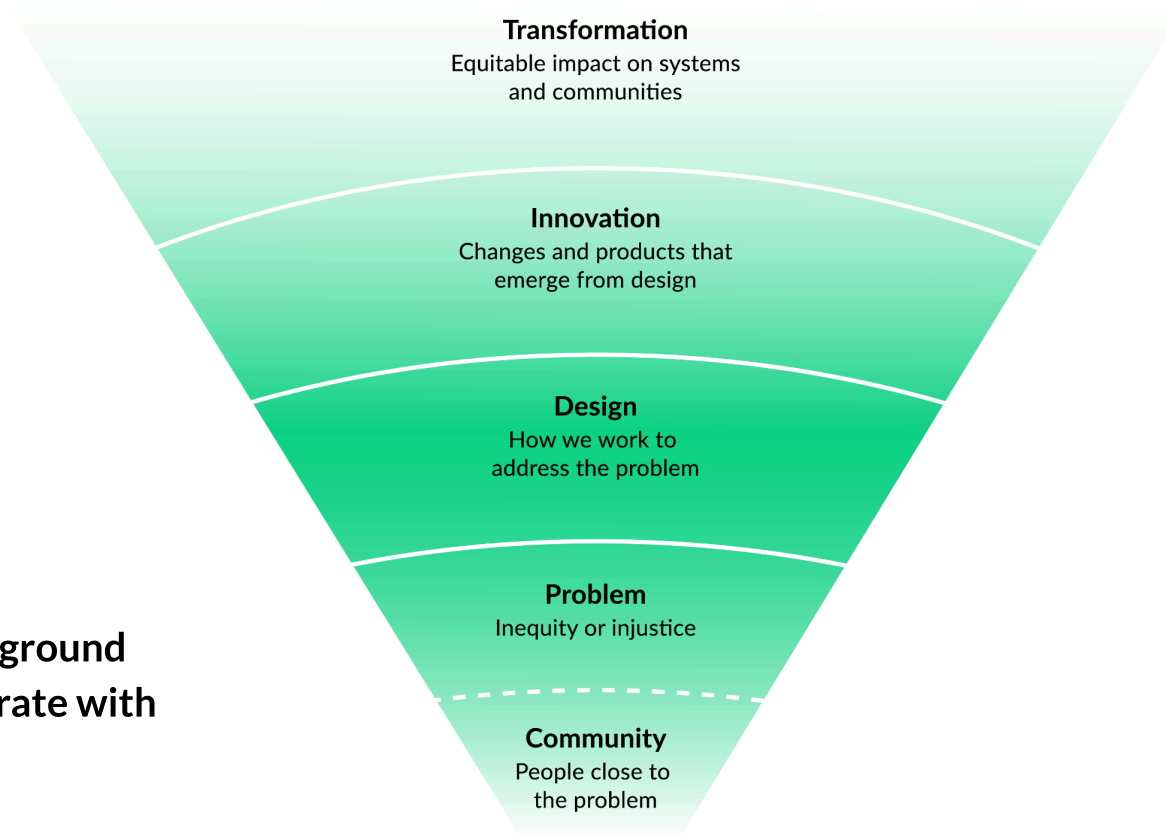
Co-design an inclusive skills-based learn+work system with and for New Majority Learner-Earners that facilitates upward economic mobility and closes opportunity gaps.



Our Approach

We use the
power of design
to transform how
we learn + work.

Transformation is only possible if we ground ourselves in the problem and collaborate with people closest to the problem.





Community College Growth Engine





Learner-centered design has never been more crucial.

To build a more accessible future, we must design education systems that support new majority learners' engagement in their learning.

Designing Postsecondary Education **with** Learners

Who are the learners
we primarily work with?

Frontline Workers

Transfer Students

Single Parents

Non-degreed Adults

First-generation Students

Underinvested Communities



Learners



Institutions



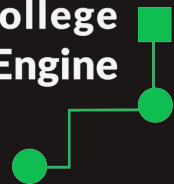
Employers



About Us



Community College
Growth Engine



The Community College Growth Engine (CCGE) is a **design accelerator** hosted by Education Design Lab. The CCGE team supports community colleges in delivering **skills-focused, market-driven education, positioning them as regional talent agents that connect education to employment.** Our initiative addresses the urgent need for innovative solutions to close the growing skills gap.

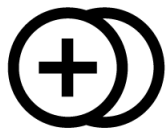
How might we design equitable and accessible micro-pathways toward high-growth careers endorsed by employers and visible to learners moving from post-secondary education into the workforce?



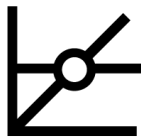
Education Design Lab

Design Criteria

In order to meet the needs of New Majority Learners and employers, micro-pathways must:



Include **two or more** credentials that are **stackable, portable, + track** toward a degree



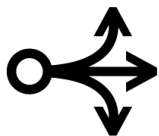
Align to dynamic **regional labor market** employment + wage data



Be employer-initiated + validated



Be completed in **one year** or less



Be offered in a **flexible** delivery format



Be affordable



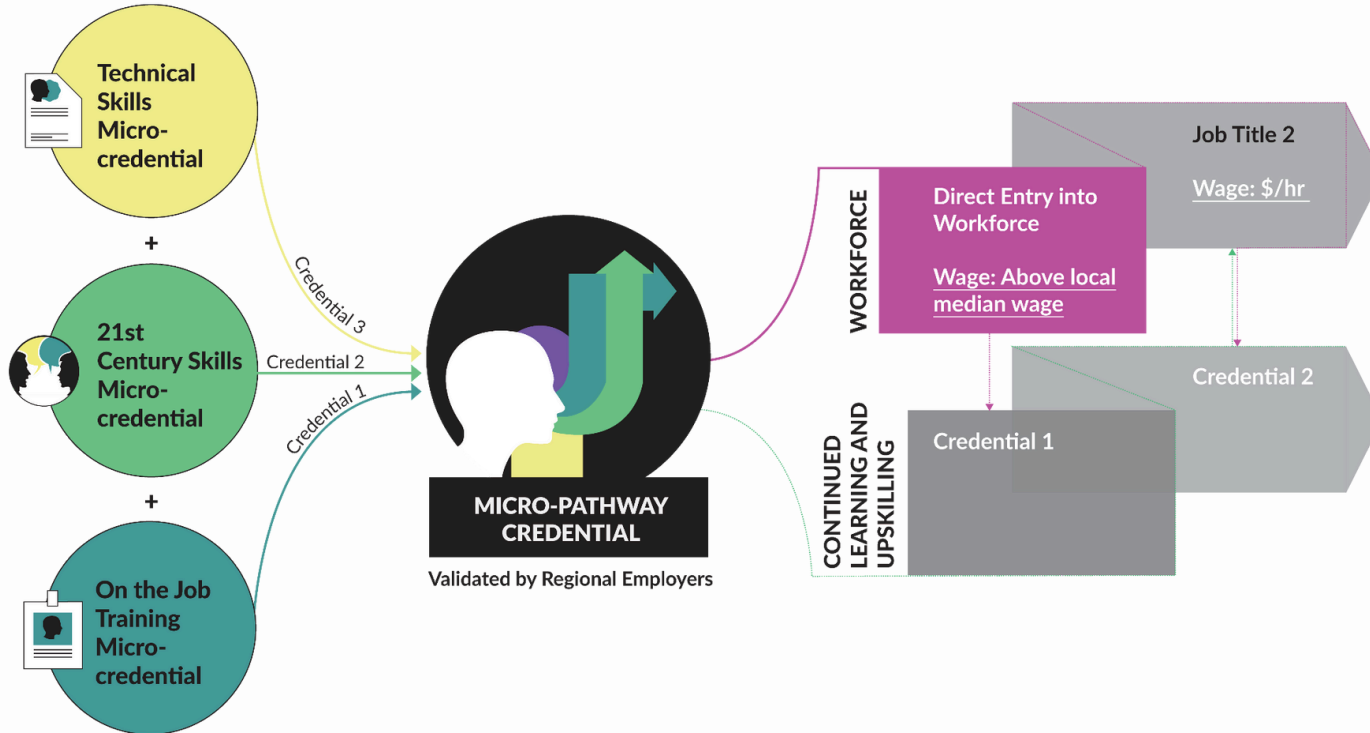
Be digitally discoverable



Integrate **technical + durable** skills

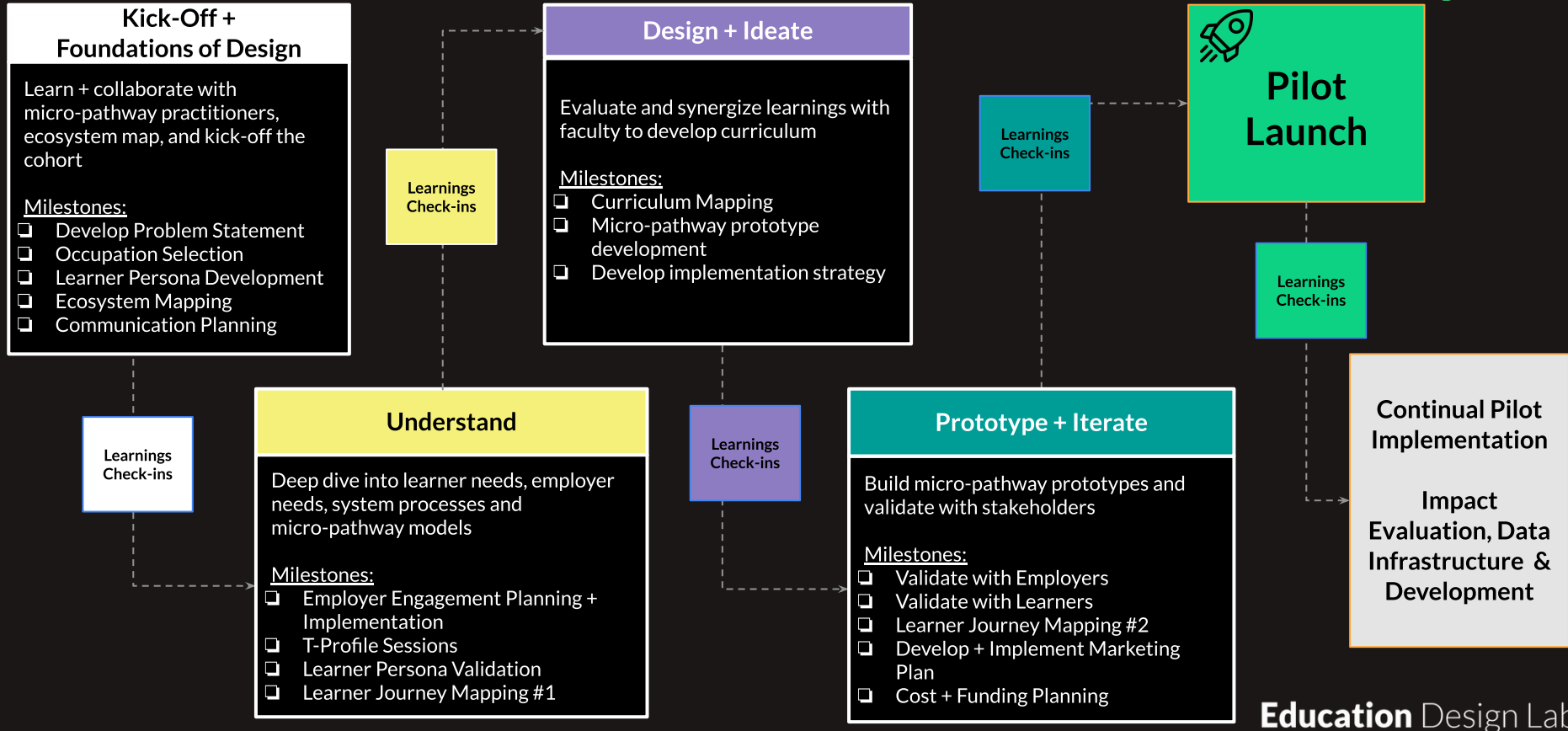


Micro-Pathway Model



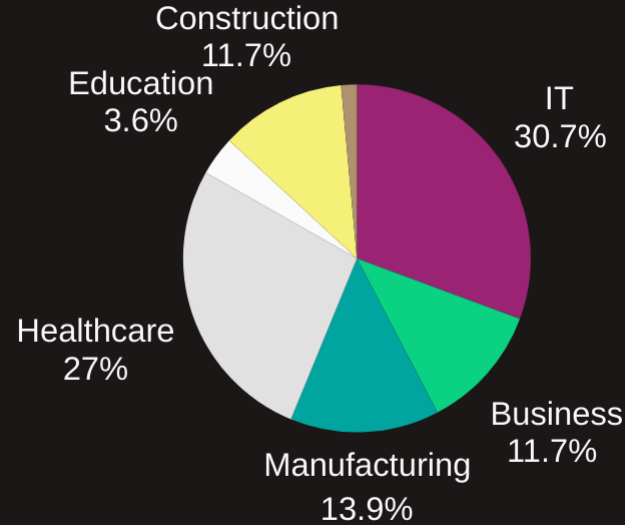
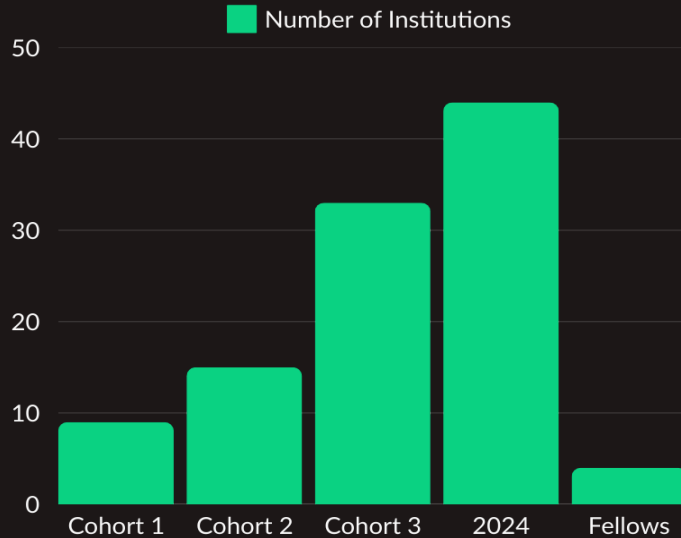
Arc of Engagement

Community College
Growth Engine



CCGE Impact: By the Numbers

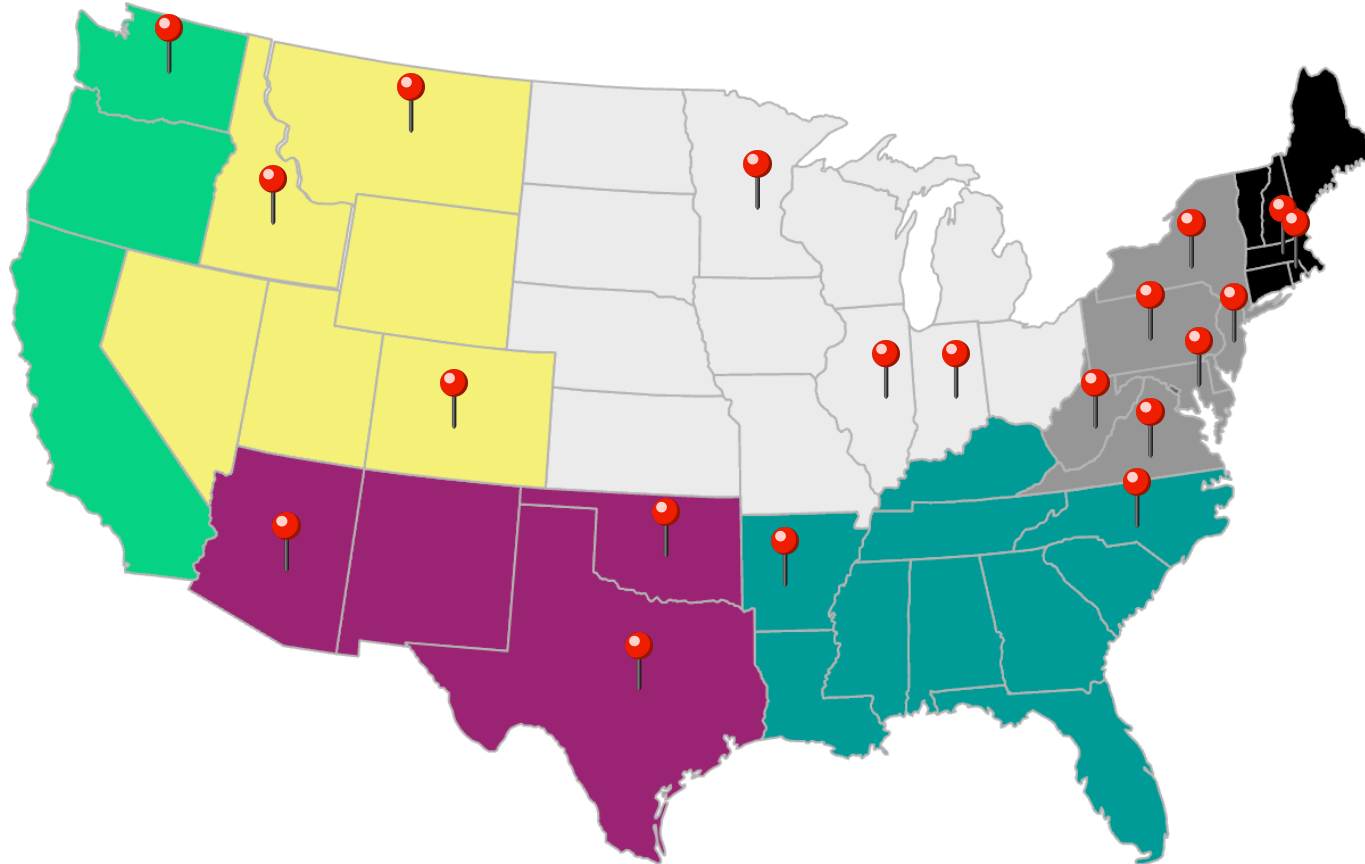
Community College Growth Engine



Since the 2021 launch of the Community College Growth Engine (CCGE), the Lab has worked with over **100+ colleges** and systems nationwide to design, launch and develop more than **211 employer-validated micro-pathways** across **seven sectors**, covering more than **111 occupations** that connect New Majority Learners to employment in careers at or above median wage helping to bridge the gap between education and workforce demand.

A National Movement with Regional Impact

Community College
Growth Engine



Rocky Mount: 23 Colleges

Midwest: 11 Colleges

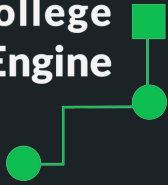
New England: 3 Colleges

Mid-Atlantic: 18 Colleges

Southeast: 27 Colleges

Southwest: 16 Colleges

Pacific: 3 Colleges



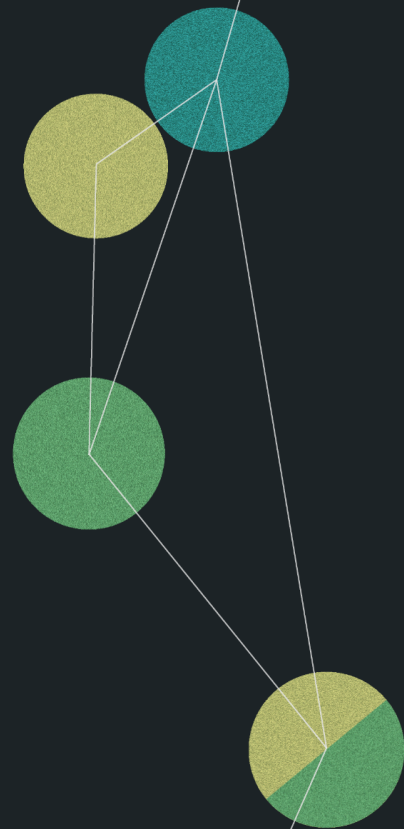
We've learned...

Designing micro-pathways can serve as a “gateway” for community college transformation through:

- Stackable Program Design
- Employer Engagement
- Marketing to New Majority Learners
- Noncredit to Credit Alignment
- Data Collection

This kind of institution-wide transformation must be driven by senior leadership.

Developing an Effective Design Team

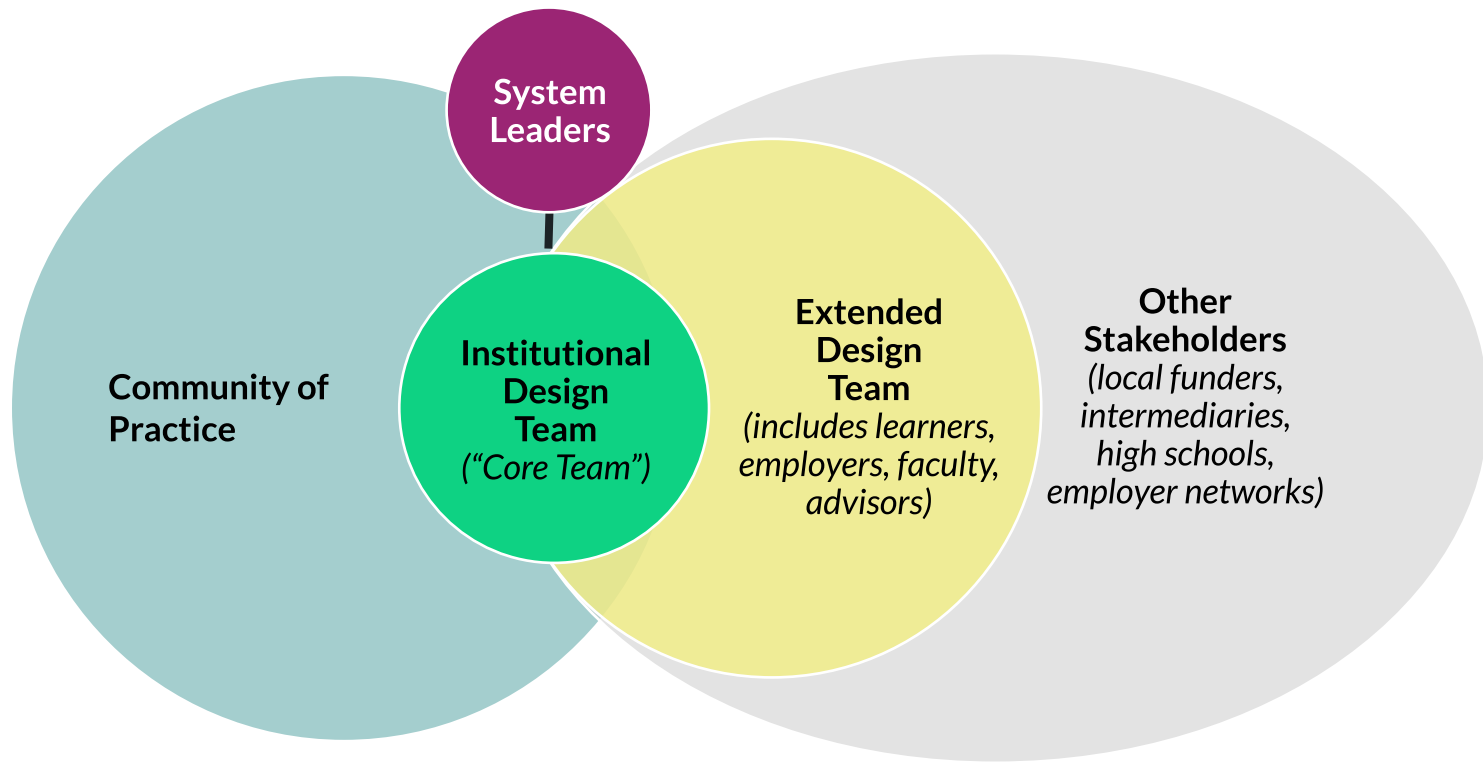


What is a Design Team?

- A group of people dedicated to the outcomes of this work
- Committed to this work for the first year, and beyond
- Includes multiple stakeholder groups (*i.e.-College leaders, faculty, staff, learners, external partners*)
- Provide diverse perspectives and expertise



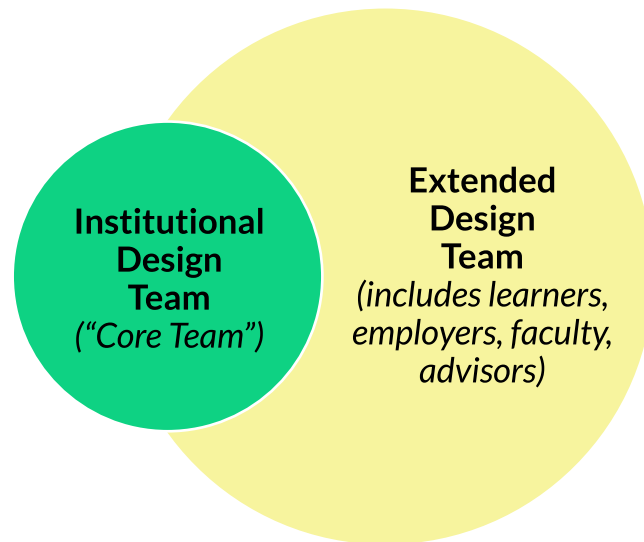
Design Team Structure



Potential Design Team Members

While the specific makeup of the teams will vary from institution to institution, each institutional design teams and codesign partners typically consist of the following participants throughout the design process.

- Design Lead/Workforce Representative
- Data Lead/ IT Representative
- Academic Representation from Program Areas/Industries selected
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Research + Evaluation
- Student Services + Supports
- Employer Partnerships/Business Development
- Senior Leadership
- Financial aid + college foundation
- Learner co-designers
- Employer Partners
- K-12 Partners



**Other key strategic partners may be brought into select sessions as necessary
(e.g. marketing, advising, financial services, communications, etc.)*

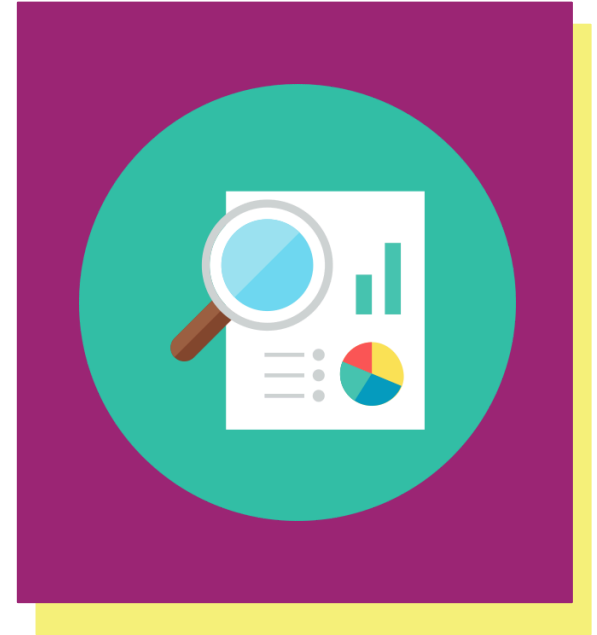
The Design Team Lead

- **1 Design Lead per team**
- **Serves as point-of-contact and liaison for this work**
- **Centers equity and learners in your work**
- **Does not need to be a SME in the industries the team is focused on**
- **Move/remove barriers for the team both internally and externally**
- **Collaborate with the Lab Team**



The Data Lead

- **1 Data Lead per team**
- **Serves as point-of-contact data-related components of this work**
- **Helps the team understand how data is collected, managed, stored, distributed within the institution and/ or system**
- **Does not need to be a part of every design session**
- **Collaborates with the Lab Team**





Together,
WE WILL.



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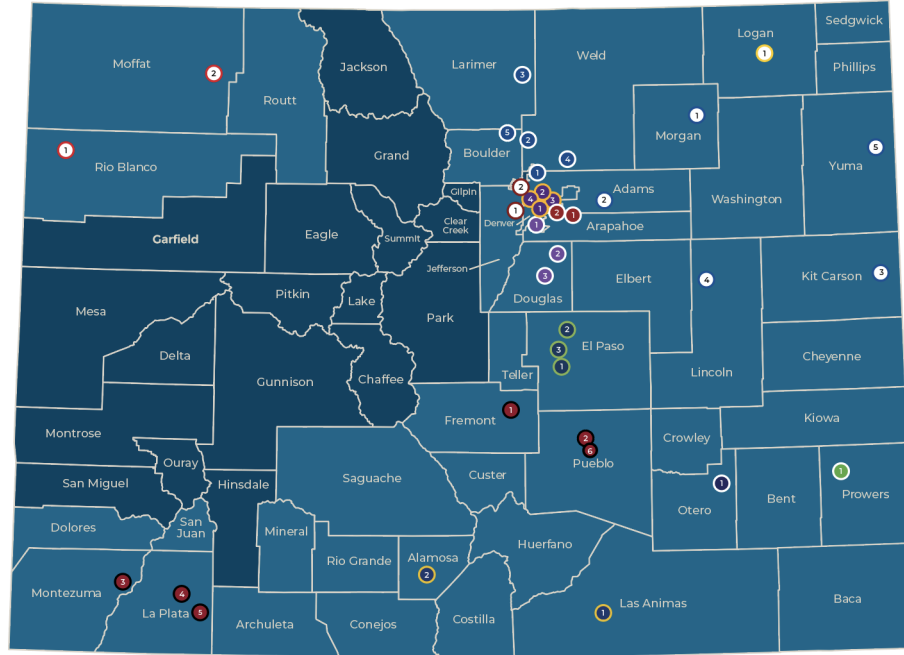
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Economic Mobility
- Education for All
- Empowered Talent
- Partner of Choice
- The Power of 13



COLORADO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

13 Colleges. 35 Locations. Online Everywhere.



ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① LITTLETON CAMPUS
- ② LEGACY CAMPUS
- ③ CASTLE ROCK - STURM



COLORADO NORTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① RANGELY CAMPUS
- ② CRAIG CAMPUS



COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA

- ① CENTRETCH CAMPUS
- ② LOWRY CAMPUS



COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER

- ① CENTRETCH CAMPUS
- ② LOWRY CAMPUS
- ③ LOWRY CAMPUS
- ④ CEC EARLY COLLEGE



FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① WESTMINSTER CAMPUS
- ② BOULDER COUNTY CAMPUS
- ③ LARIMER CAMPUS
- ④ CENTER FOR INTEGRATED MANUFACTURING



LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① LAMAR CAMPUS



MORGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① FORT MORGAN CAMPUS
- ② BENNET CENTER
- ③ BURLINGTON CENTER
- ④ LIMON CENTER
- ⑤ WRAY CENTER



NORTHEASTERN JUNIOR COLLEGE

- ① STERLING CAMPUS



OTERO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① LA JUNTA CAMPUS



OTERO COLLEGE

- ① LA JUNTA CAMPUS



PIKES PEAK STATE COLLEGE

- ① CENTENNIAL CAMPUS
- ② RAMPART RANGE CAMPUS
- ③ DOWNTOWN STUDIO CAMPUS



PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① PUEBLO CAMPUS
- ② FREMONT CAMPUS
- ③ MANCOS CAMPUS
- ④ DURANGO SITE
- ⑤ BAYFIELD SITE
- ⑥ NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH TLC



RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- ① LAKEWOOD CAMPUS
- ② ARVADA CAMPUS



TRINIDAD STATE COLLEGE

- ① TRINIDAD CAMPUS
- ② VALLEY CAMPUS



GOAL:

Increase and diversify
behavioral healthcare
workforce



Supporting Services

- Healthy Students = Strong Students
- Clinical Opportunities



Academic Pathways

- Focus on Stackability
- Limited Options
- High Demand
- Employer Partners



Funding and Partners

- SB22-181 Behavioral Health Career Pathways
- Education Design Lab
- Multiple Consultants

Behavioral Health Pathways: Stackability

A pathway is "stackable" when smaller curricula (micro-credentials) build into each other and into larger degrees, allowing for shorter-term gains toward longer-term goals. Take a look at the building-block style of CCCS's stackable Behavioral Health coursework represented here, noticing how micro-credential coursework fits into Associate and then Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. Stackability allows students to continue credentialed learning in small, bite-size steps toward greater qualifications!

Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant (QBHA) Bootcamp

- Self-paced, non-credit training designed in coordination with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) for current Behavioral Health professionals seeking to become QBHAs.
- Assesses competency demonstration from 4-courses included in the QBHA micro-credential, as well as upskilling opportunities.
- Successful completers will be QBHAs and therefore eligible to serve as part of a Medicaid reimbursed care team.
- Bootcamp completion may be leveraged as Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) at your local community college.

MICRO-CREDENTIALS

CSL Suite (9 courses)	BEH 2030	BEH 2030	SWK1100
PSY1001	SOC1001	BEH 1030	SOC2018
BEH1001	BEH1001	BEH 1030	BEH 2030
HPR1000	HPR1000	BEH 1001	BEH 1030
		PTE1010	BEH 1001
			PTE1010
Addiction Recovery Assistant	Patient Navigator	Behavioral Health + (BH+)	Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant (QBHA)
20 credits	12 credits	6 credits	10 credits
			Behavioral Health Assistant II
			16 credits

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Mental Health & Social Work (17 credits)	Addiction Recovery (17 credits)
Emphasis Courses (Student selects 1 path)	
General Education Courses (25 credits)	
Career & Technical Education Courses (25 credits)	

Associate of Applied Science
(AAS) in Behavioral Health

67 credits

BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Mental Health & Wellness (15 credits)	Addiction Recovery (15 credits)
Emphasis Courses (Student selects 1 path)	
General Education Courses (21 credits)	
Career & Technical Education Courses (17 credits)	

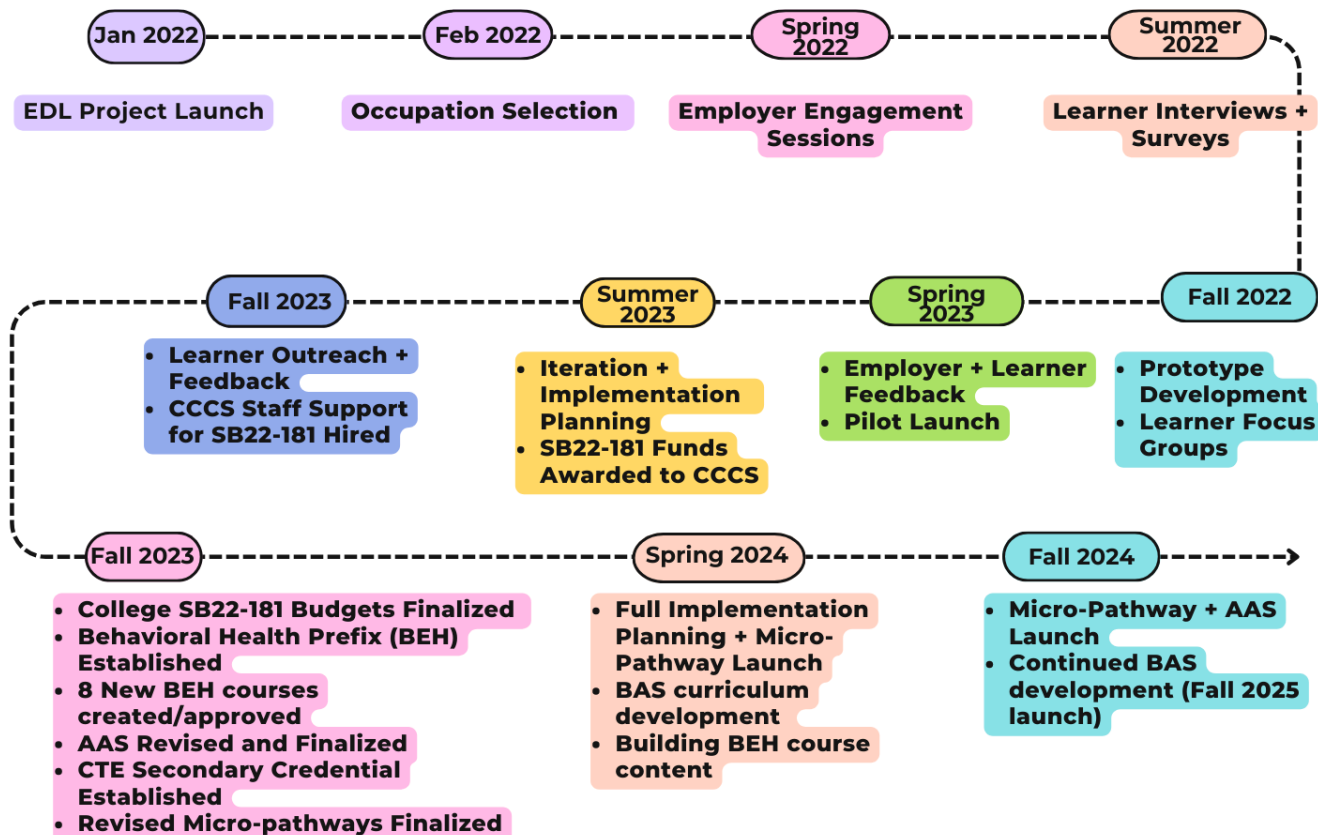
AAS

Bachelor of Applied Science
(BAS) in Behavioral Health

53 (+ 67 in AAS) = 120 credits

Timeline

Behavioral Health Project Timeline



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

CCCS Workforce Solutions

BEH Leadership Team

Education Design
Lab

Curriculum Team

Communications
Team

Strategic Partners



COLORADO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Academic Programs

Micro-credentials

to

Bachelor of
Applied Science

Micro-credential Certificates

- Behavioral Health +
- Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant - QBHA
- Behavioral Health Assistant II
- Addiction Recovery Assistant
- Patient Navigator

Degrees

- Associate of Applied Science
 - **Addiction Recovery**
 - **Mental Health and Social Work**
- Bachelor of Applied Science
 - **Addiction Recovery**
 - **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

www.cccs.edu



Colorado Community College System

Behavioral Health Assistant - Qualified BHA

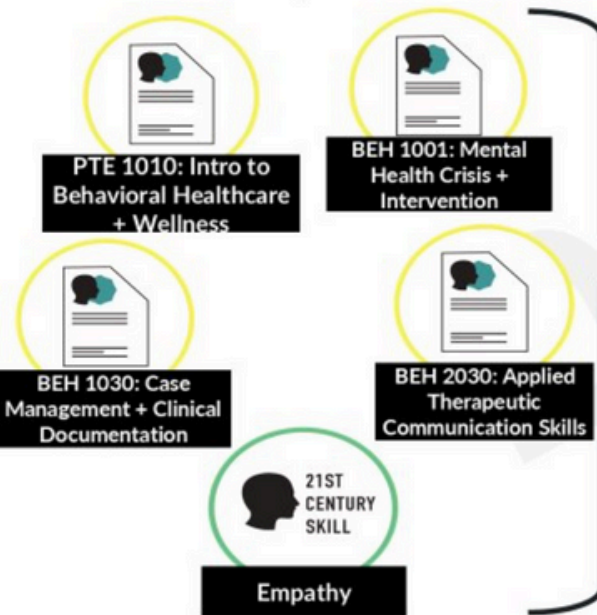
A Micro-Pathway to Become a Behavioral Health Assistant



SUMMARY: The *Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant* micro-credential ensures students develop entry-level behavioral health knowledge and competencies. Upon completion of this coursework, they will be a Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant as outlined by the Behavioral Health Administration. The curriculum includes entry-level skills and foundational knowledge about behavioral health and wellness, intercultural competency, therapeutic communication, case management, and crisis intervention.

CREDENTIALS EARNED

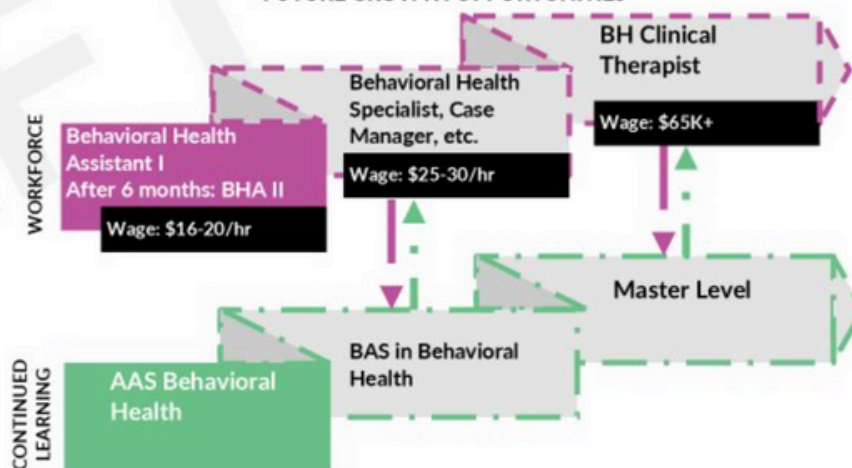
6 months | 10 Credits towards higher credential | Hybrid



TOP SKILLS:

1. Understanding of Behavioral Health and Healthcare Systems
2. Empathy and Healthy Boundaries
3. Therapeutic Communication Skills
4. Case Management and Documentation
5. Crisis Intervention and Wellness
6. Trauma-Informed Care and Cultural Competency

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Medicaid Competencies: (Under supervision), these individuals will be able to do elements of: Wellness Promotion, Education, Community Needs Assessment, Screening, Referral, Crisis Management, Case Management, Orientation to Services, and Individual & Group Interventions

Behavioral Health Pathways: Stackability

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AAS

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53 (+ 67 in AAS) = 120 credits

Support Services

Secondary CTE
Behavioral
Health
Credential

\$1.3M in
philanthropic
funding for
scholarships

The secondary credential enables instructors to offer the Qualified Behavioral Health Assistant courses at the secondary level. The instructor's ability to offer concurrent enrollment will be limited to the 4 QBHA courses as long as the instructor and courses are connected to an approved secondary CTE program.

PTE 1010, BEH 1001, BEH 1030, and BEH 2030

*Additional concurrent enrollment courses can be included in this pathway as long as the instructor has the appropriate qualifications to offer additional courses that align with the connected AAS.



Counselor Responsibilities

Counselor
Service Provision:
3-Pronged Approach

Individual Counseling

Group Counseling

Psychoeducation & Outreach



Collective Reach: AY 23-24

175: students received individual services

748: individual sessions

1000s: students received group/team/
campus-wide programming

30,000-Foot View

This approach:

- Exposes students to the behavioral health field as **client** and potentially as **entry-level practitioner** (psychoeducation intern); advocates for student involvement in the mental/behavioral health field, increasing interest in mental/behavioral health services, curricula, & careers
- Creates inherent program sustainability by moving institutions toward “career pathway and Behavioral Health Administration training alignment”
- Supports retention goals; **healthy humans = engaged & invested students!**
- Appeals to incoming students (& their parents!)
- Increases rural community pool of qualified mental/behavioral health providers & practitioners
- Offers opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships with local industries, agencies, institutions, & practices



Want to learn more?

Enroll in the CCGE Micro-Pathway Micro-Credential



MICRO-PATHWAY DESIGN
Education Design Lab | CCGE



SCAN ME!

<https://bit.ly/CCGE-Micro-credential>



Education Design Lab



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COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Fireside Chat Q&A





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Contact Us

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