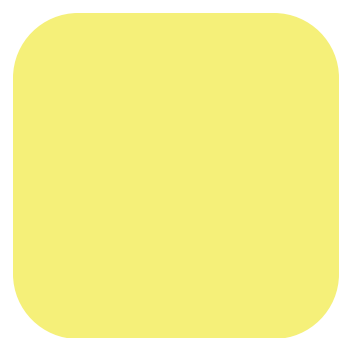




Building Careers Through Credentials

June 2026



Who We Are

Education Design Lab (the Lab) is a 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.



Human-Centered Design

Step One

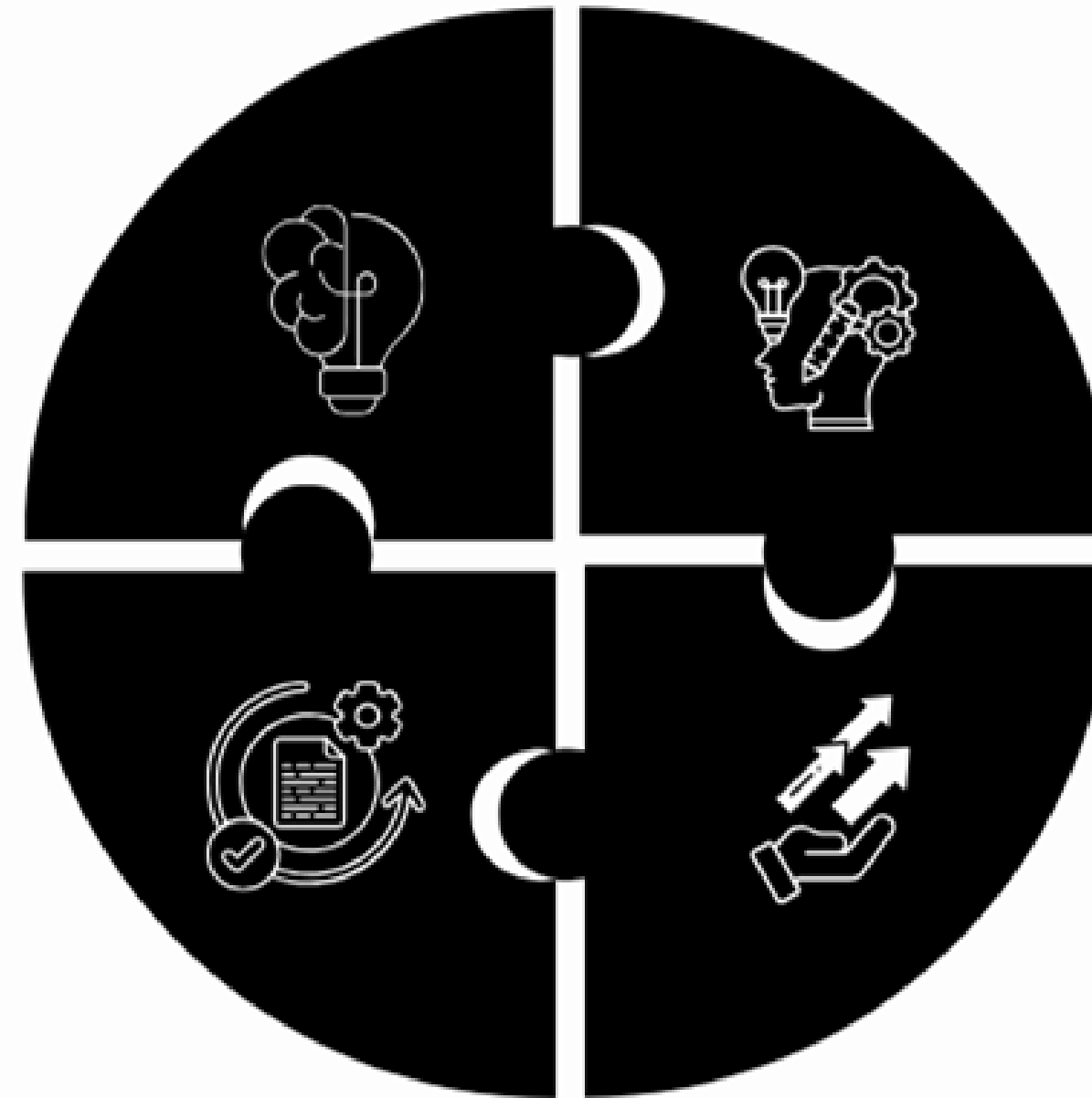
Understand

Learn + collaborate with micro-pathway practitioners. Understand who learners are and map their journey.

Step Two

Prototype + Iterate

Build micro-pathway prototypes, gather feedback, and map the holistic learner journey.



Step Three

Design + Ideate

Deep dive into employer needs, institutional processes, and micro-pathway models.

Step Four

Launch

Finalize micro-pathway components, prepare for registration, and recruit learners.



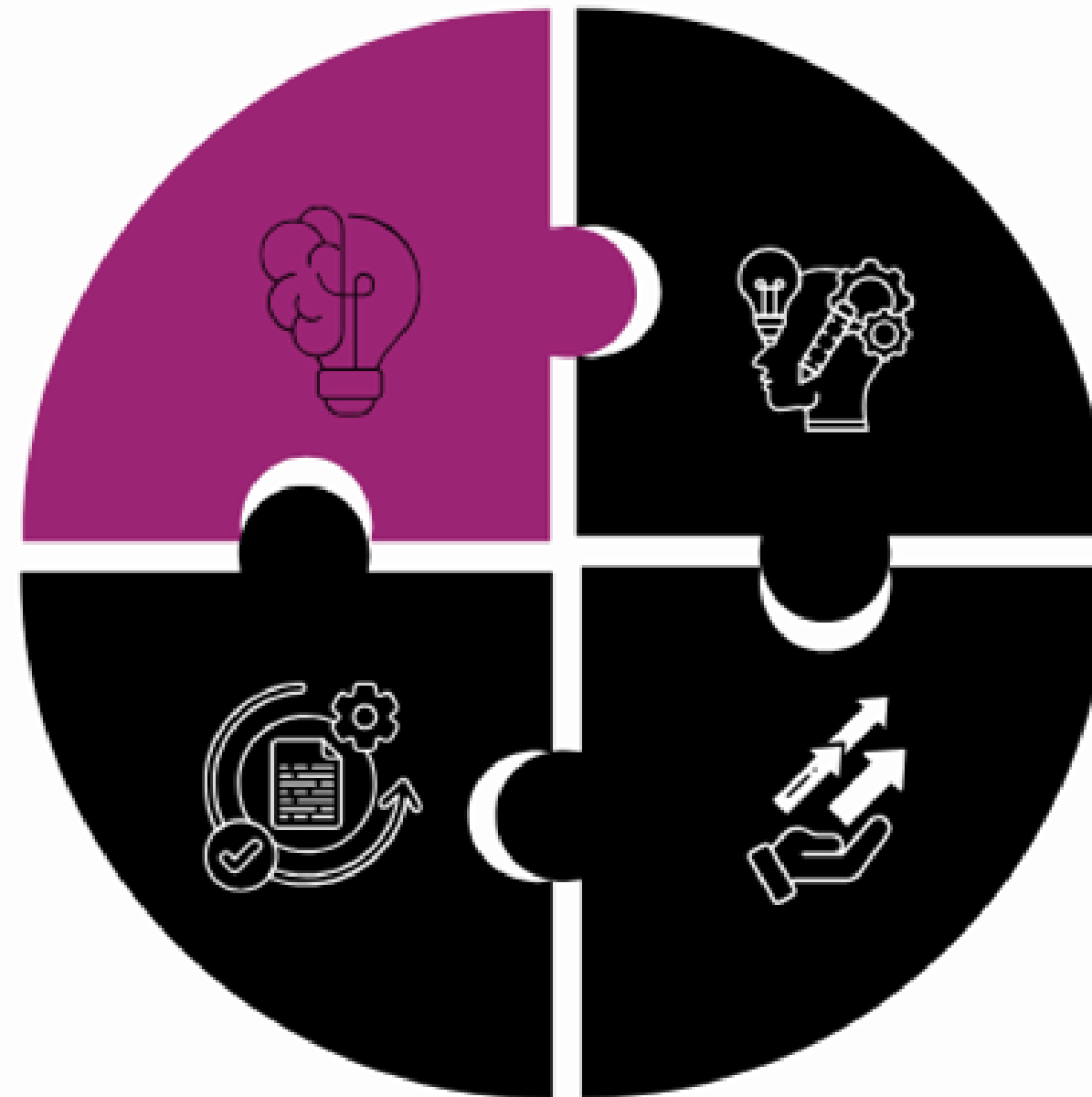
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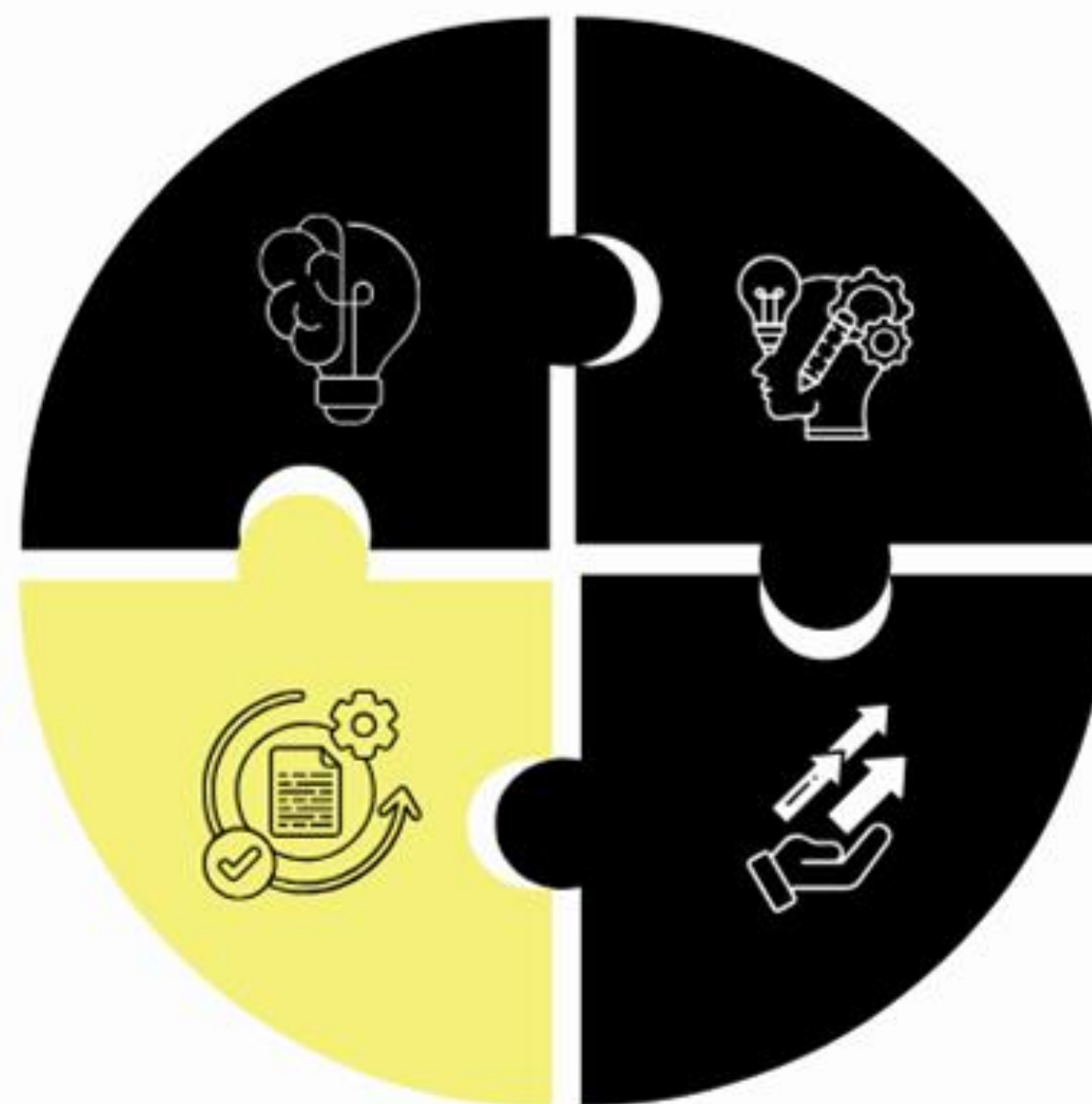
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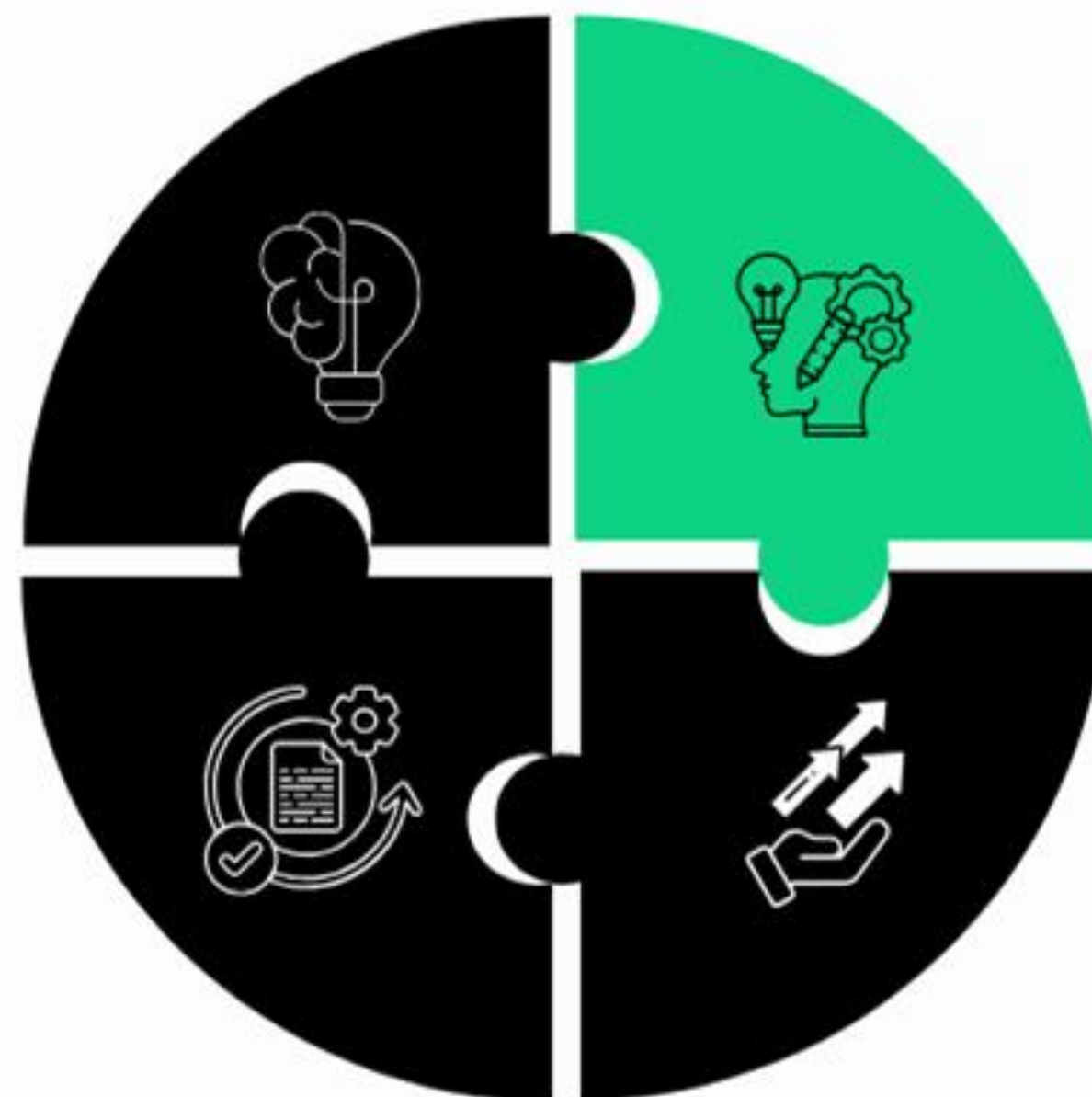
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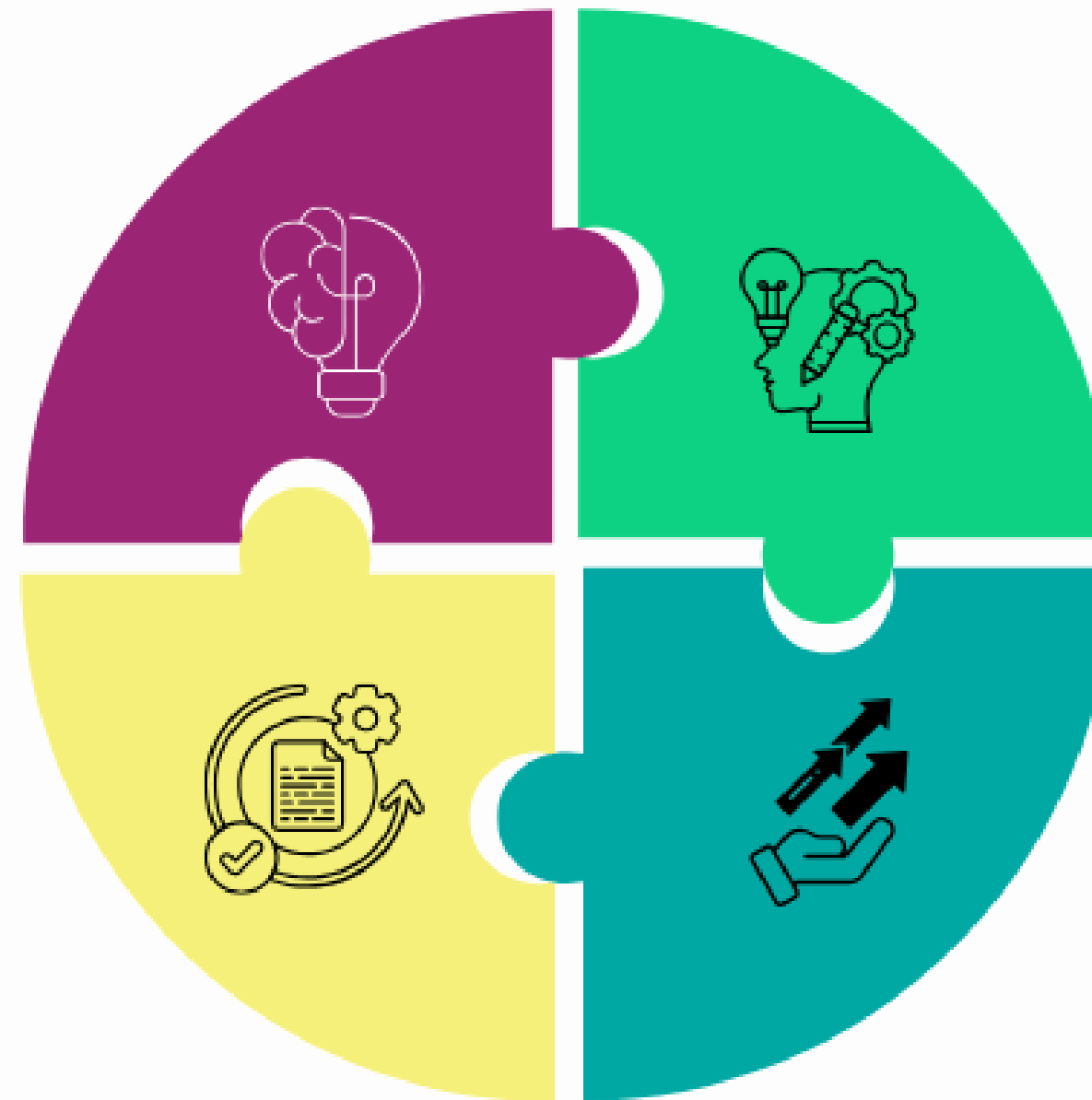
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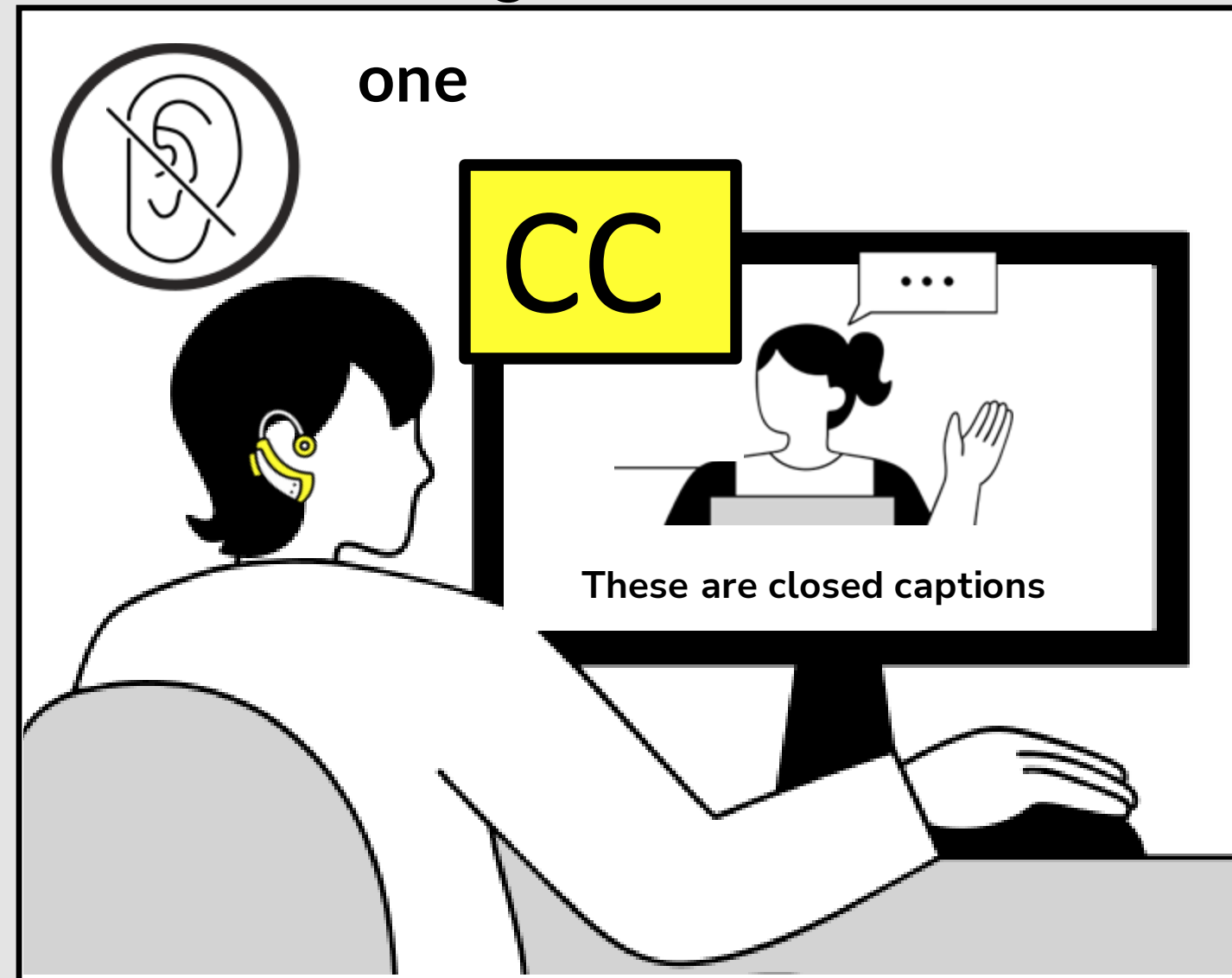
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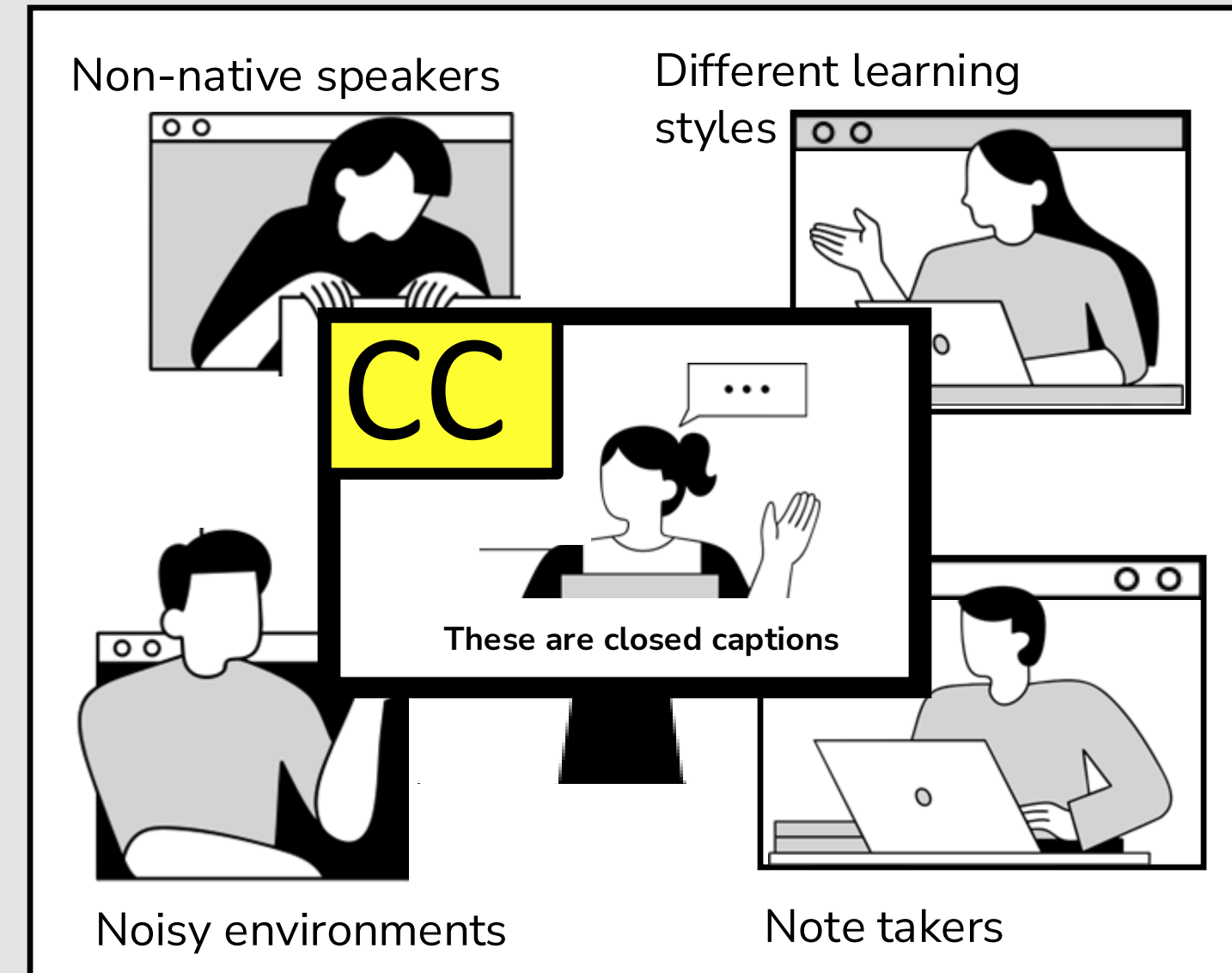
Finalize micro-pathway components, prepare for registration, and recruit learners.

Design for those who need access **most** + you improve learning for **everyone**

Elements designed for



also helps...



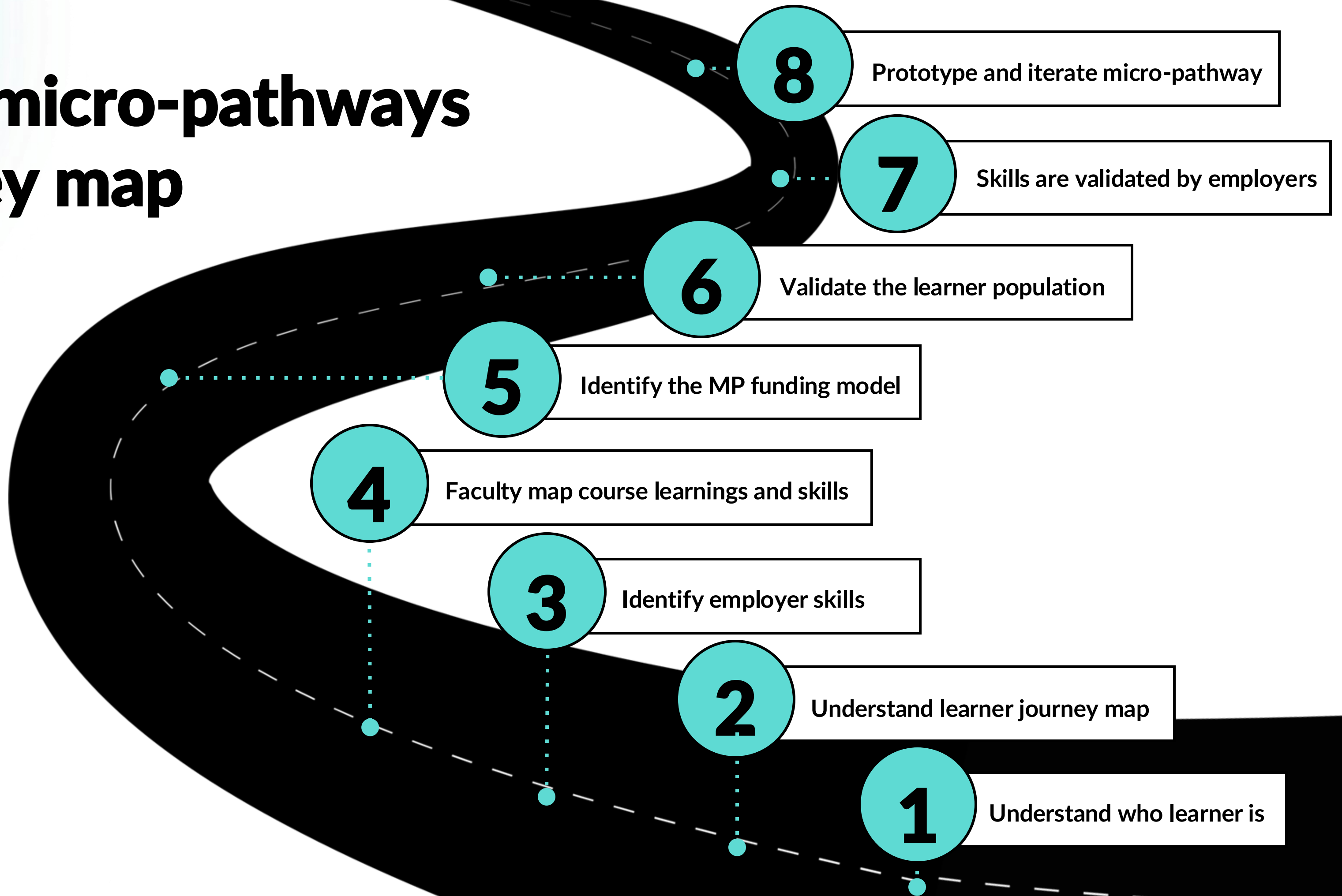
+ everyone benefits

Design Question Community College Growth Engine

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?

COMMON GOAL Close the gap, and create socio-economic opportunities for all

CCGE micro-pathways journey map



Defining Micro-pathways

In this new time, we need a new class of credential that is more aligned to the market, designed for learner needs, and faster than traditional offerings...

Micro-pathways:
A new model to better address program **affordability**, **flexibility**, **relevance**, **portability**, and **visibility** to meet the needs of a rapidly changing knowledge economy.



MICRO-PATHWAY CREDENTIAL

Validated by
Regional Employers

WORKFORCE

Direct entry into the workforce

Wage: \$XX/hr

Job title 2

Wage: \$XX/hr



CONTINUED LEARNING

Credential 1

Credential 2

Design Criteria

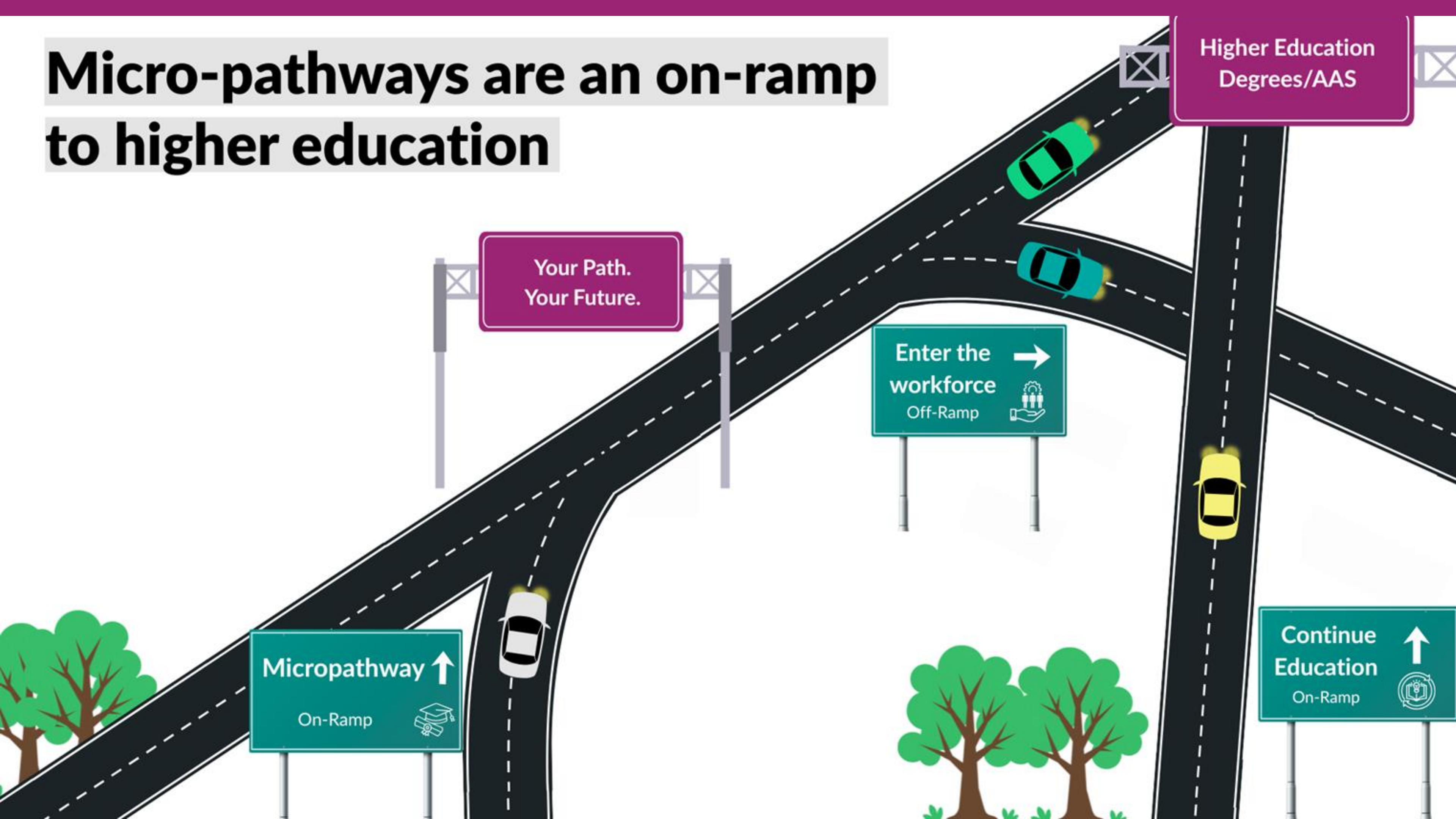
In order to meet the needs of New Majority Learners and employers, micro-pathways must:



How do micro-pathways compare to certificates and degrees?

	Micro-Pathways	Certificates	Degrees
Focus	Specific Skills	Focused, often broader than micro-pathways	Broad, comprehensive education
Duration	Weeks to months	Months to years	Years (2-4+)
Scope	Narrow, skill-based	Focused, but often broader than micro-pathways	Wide, covering multiple subjects
Credential Type	Digital badges or credential award	Certificate	Diploma (Associate's, Bachelor's, etc)
Purpose	Skill enhancement, career advancement	Skill or knowledge improvement	Career preparation, foundational knowledge
Recognition	Growing, industry-specific	Varies by field	Widely recognized
Cost	Lower, often more affordable	Moderate, varies widely	Higher, significant investment
Entry Requirements	Minimal, flexible	Varies, usually less restrictive	Higher, standardized (e.g. GPA)

Micro-pathways are an on-ramp to higher education



IMPACT

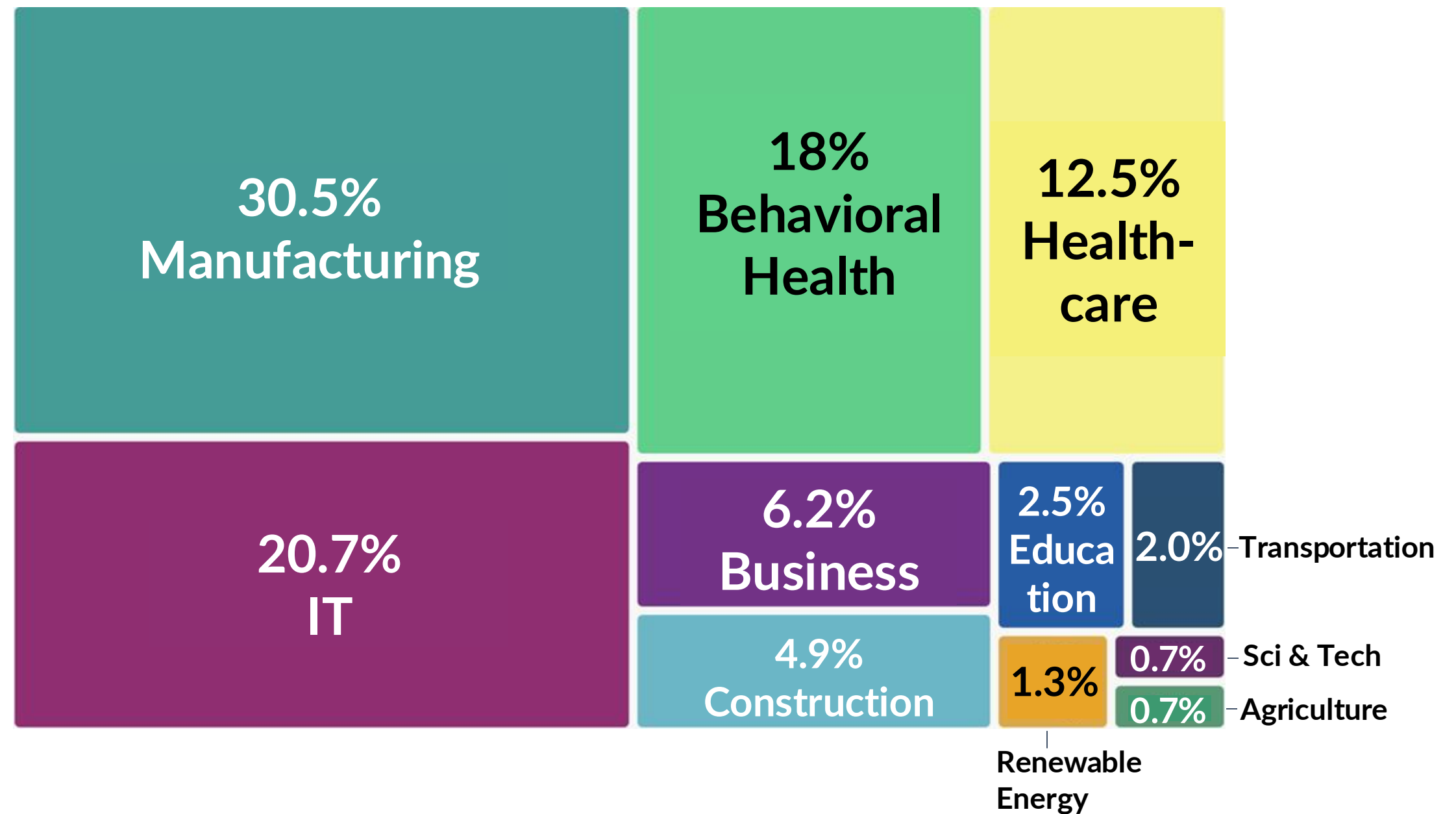
CCGE GROWTH ACROSS SECTORS

Community College
Growth Engine



Manufacturing overtakes IT as CCGE's largest sector, now representing nearly 1 in 3 Micro-Pathways.

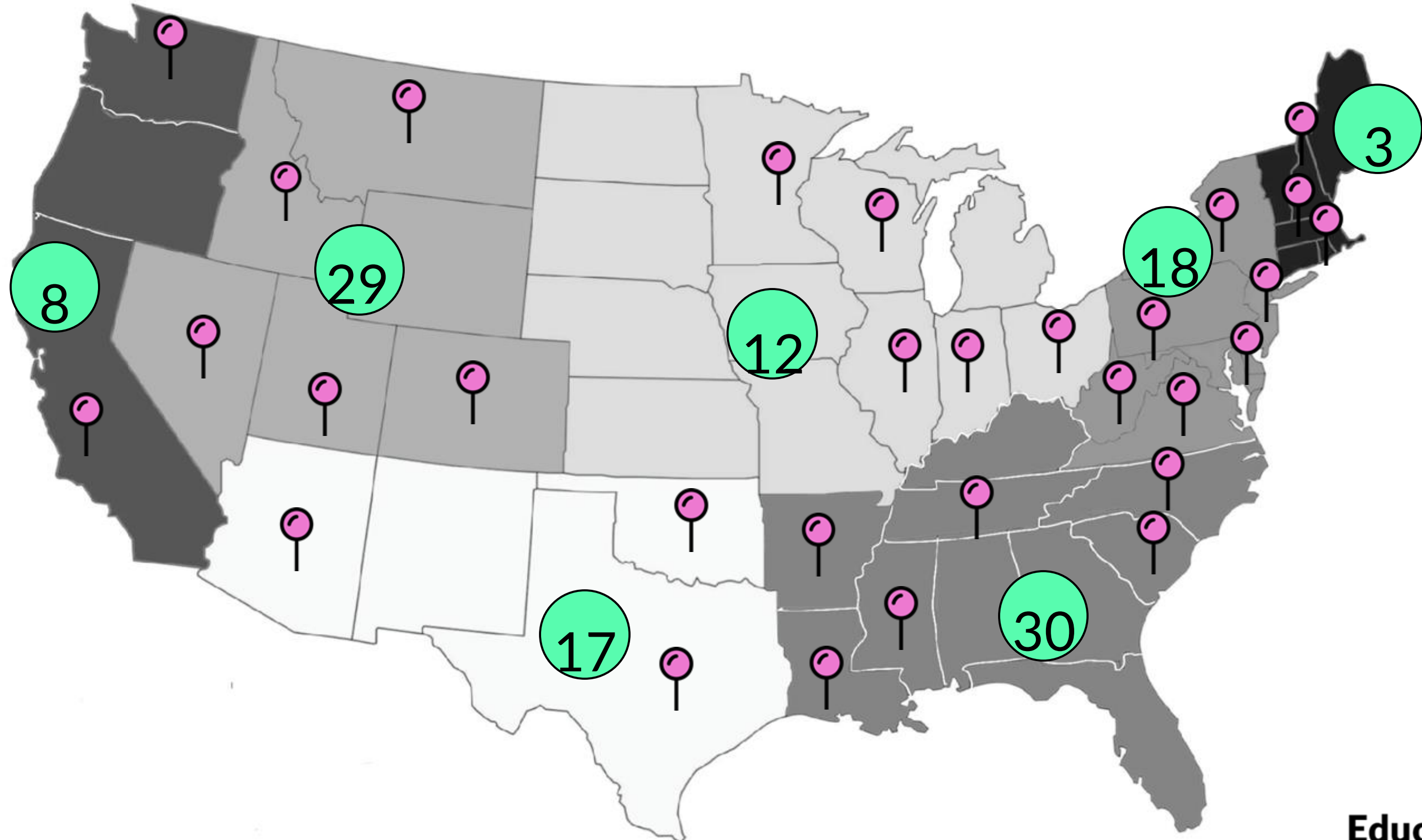
Since the launch of CCGE, the Lab has worked with **120+ colleges and systems** nationwide across **30+ states** to design, launch, and develop **300+ employer-validated micro-pathways** across **10 sectors**, covering **111+ occupations** connecting New Majority Learners to careers at or above median wage.



REACH

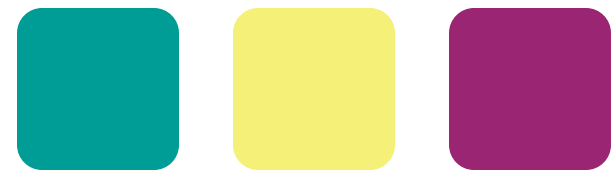
Colleges implementing micro-pathways is a national movement with regional impact

Community College
Growth Engine





Workforce Pell



Why Workforce Pell Matters Now

- **Access & Affordability**

Pell expands to short-term programs, reducing cost barriers for working learners.

- **Workforce Alignment**

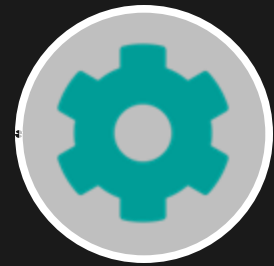
Links funding to high-skill, in-demand occupations with real employer validation.

- **Pathway Design**


Drives institutions to build stackable, credential-to-career structures.


Workforce Pell is federal Pell Grant aid for approved short-term workforce programs, so eligible students can use grant dollars for fast, job-focused training that leads to in-demand careers.

Reminder: What is Workforce Pell?



Program Guidelines


 150–599 clock hours & 8–15 weeks duration


 Accredited institution (1+ year prior approval)

Cannot include correspondence, remedial, study-abroad, or direct assessment courses




Student Qualification

 Pell Grant eligible (in qualified program)


 NO graduate-level enrollment/degree

 Prorated grant based on length


 Cannot receive Workforce Pell & regular Pell simultaneously



State Accountability

 Align with High-Skill, High-Wage, or In-Demand Sectors

 Lead to Recognized, Stackable, Portable Credential

 Verify Completion (150% time) & Placement (70% within 180 days)



US Dept. of Education



Median Earnings (Adjusted) - 150% Poverty line = Value-Added Earnings

Tuition & fees must be LESS than this new metric for completers after 3 years



What the Final Rules Mean



State Oversight

- Governors carry the main approval and compliance burden.
- States must calculate the 70% completion and 70% job placement benchmarks.
- Workforce Pell approval is state by state, not automatic across states.



New Compliance Rules

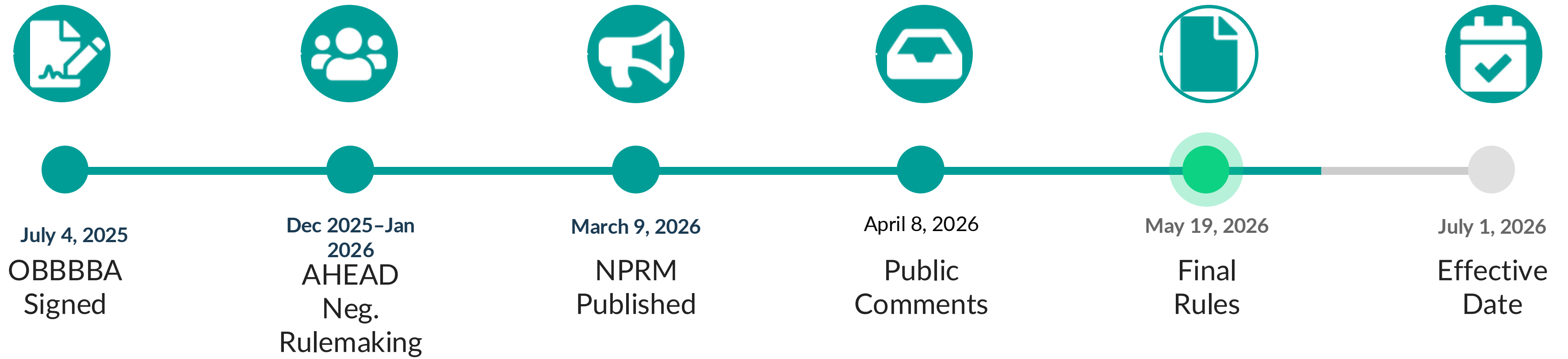
- By 2029–30, job placement must reflect employment in a related or comparable high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupation.
- No more than 25% of a program can be outsourced to an ineligible partner.
- Tuition and fees must stay within value-added earnings limits.



What Colleges Must Show

- Programs must document stackability, portability, and transfer into credit-bearing pathways.
- Colleges need written policies showing how short-term credentials connect to further education.
- Cross-state access may require bilateral agreements between states.

What Comes Next?



● Urgency for Your Institution

Institutions and states should be focusing on developing policies and practices to support: program redesign, data system alignment, employer validation, financial aid staffing, and governor-level approval.

Why this opportunity

A Lab-led opportunity to help colleges and states design and launch a first wave of high-quality Workforce Pell pathways

- Workforce Pell creates real opportunity to expand access to short-term, high-value workforce pathways.
- The challenge is not just understanding the rules, it is designing pathways that meet the criteria, work for learners, and can be sustained and scaled.
- This opportunity is designed for a cohort of colleges within a state ready to move from readiness to launch.
- Rather than offering another compliance checklist, the Lab would provide a hands-on design and launch experience focused on practical implementation.

What the Lab would support

Support colleges and states in designing Workforce Pell pathways that are viable, learner-centered, and built for scale.

- Identify 3–5 high-potential short-term programs with a cohort of colleges within a state.
- Clarify Workforce Pell data and reporting expectations, including what can be tracked now and what needs to be built.
- Redesign programs to align with Workforce Pell requirements, employer demand, and learner outcomes.
- Build clear noncredit-to-credit stackable pathways connected to longer-term credential value.
- Support cross-functional design teams that include academic leaders, workforce leaders, financial aid, advising, learners, employers, and state or system partners.
- Create practical implementation scorecards to track progress and strengthen quality over time.

What partners will walk away with

Partners will have concrete assets and a stronger foundation for early Workforce Pell implementation.

- A Workforce Pell data readiness map for colleges.
- A portfolio of Workforce Pell-ready program concepts or redesigned pathways.
- Program designs aligned to federal and state criteria.
- Pathway visuals showing how short-term training stacks into certificates or degrees.
- A simple implementation scorecard and a playbook capturing key decisions, supports, and lessons for future scale.

This opportunity is best suited for partners with leadership commitment, willingness to work across silos, and interest in building strong pathways, not just adding more short-term offerings.



Our Impact



Beyond program design, layers of transformation

- New ways of thinking and working**
Faculty, advisors, and administrators start approaching decisions differently more iteratively, more learner-centered, more connected to labor market realities.
- Credit and non-credit alignment**
Silos between credit and non-credit divisions begin to dissolve, enabling clearer pathways and shared language across teams that rarely talked before.

- Boundary-spanning leadership**
Connects institutional, regional, and state priorities so isolated efforts align into momentum and scale becomes possible.
- Initiative alignment**
Embeds pathway work into workforce plans, student success agendas, and state priorities already underway increasing durability and reach.



- Programs shaped by real demand**
Because employers are in the room from the start, what learners study reflects what the regional economy actually need and employers are more likely to hire graduates.
- Clearer, more connected pathways**
Learners encounter programs where credit counts, credentials stack, and the route to employment is visible not buried in institutional complexity.

- Shared accountability for outcomes**
Partners develop common measures and regular touchpoints making it harder for the work to stall when one player is slow or distracted.

Bunker Hill Community College

- Bunker Hill Community College is the second-largest community college in Massachusetts and one of the most diverse public colleges in New England.
- Its student body is roughly 30% Hispanic/Latino, 22% Black, 17% White, and 9% Asian, reflecting Greater Boston's working-age population more than a typical New England liberal arts campus.
- The college is known for workforce-first programming through partnerships with employers in fields such as healthcare, IT, financial services, and advanced manufacturing.
- One flagship example is the Foundations of IT Support pathway: a hybrid short-term program designed for adult learners, with R3 financial support available for eligible students and connections to industry-recognized credentials and further IT certificate pathways.

AT A GLANCE

Enrollment

9,876 undergrads

Setting

Urban / Boston metro

Most-served demographic

Hispanic/Latino (~30%)

Women

60%

Age 25+

40%

IPEDS year

2024-25

COLLEGE DEMOGRAPHICS

Bunker Hill Community College

Charlestown (Boston), Massachusetts | Public 2-year, urban | IPEDS 2024-25

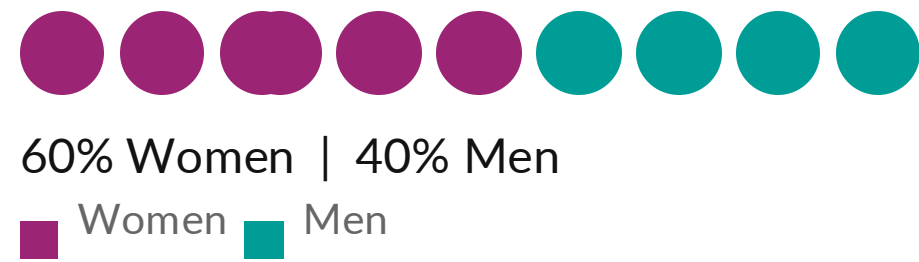


TOTAL ENROLLMENT

9,876

undergraduates

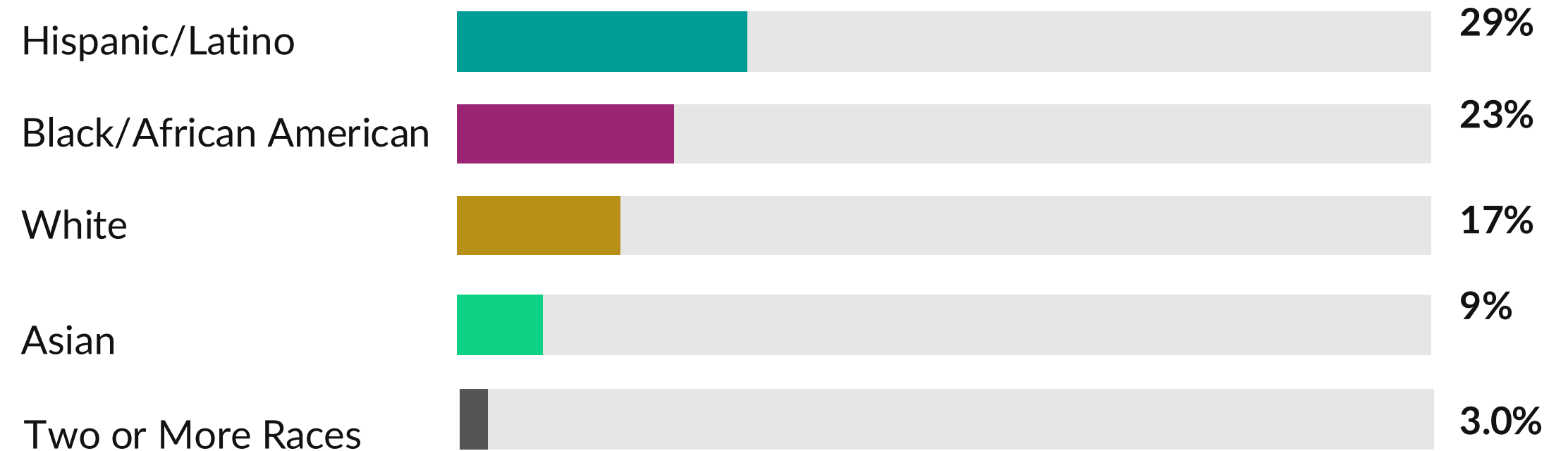
GENDER



AGE



RACE / ETHNICITY



Source: [NCES IPEDS Unit 165112](#) | Bars scaled relative to 100% of enrollment.

CREDENTIALS EARNED



CompTIA A+



Employer-sponsored
Work skills -
Challenge Day



Critical Thinking



IT Support Specialist

Validated by regional
employers:

- Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System
- Citizens - IT
- MS Walker
- Accurounds
- Boston Children's
- Cengage
- Mass High Tech Council
- Lowell Public Schools
- Case FMS

WORKFORCE

IT Support Specialist

Wage: \$27.84/hr

Server Administrator

Wage: \$36.87/hr

Network/Systems
Administrator

Wage: \$37.88/hr

CONTINUED
LEARNING

CompTIA Server+

CompTIA Network+

2 ½ MONTHS PART- TIME | NON-CREDIT | 3 CREDITS
TOWARDS HIGHER CREDENTIAL (After passing CompTIA A+ exam and meet Credit for Prior Learning requirements)

Bunker Hill | Foundations of IT Support Specialist

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

9 in 10 closed-cohort learners completed the program

Completion Rate

90%

47 completed / 52 enrolled (closed cohorts)

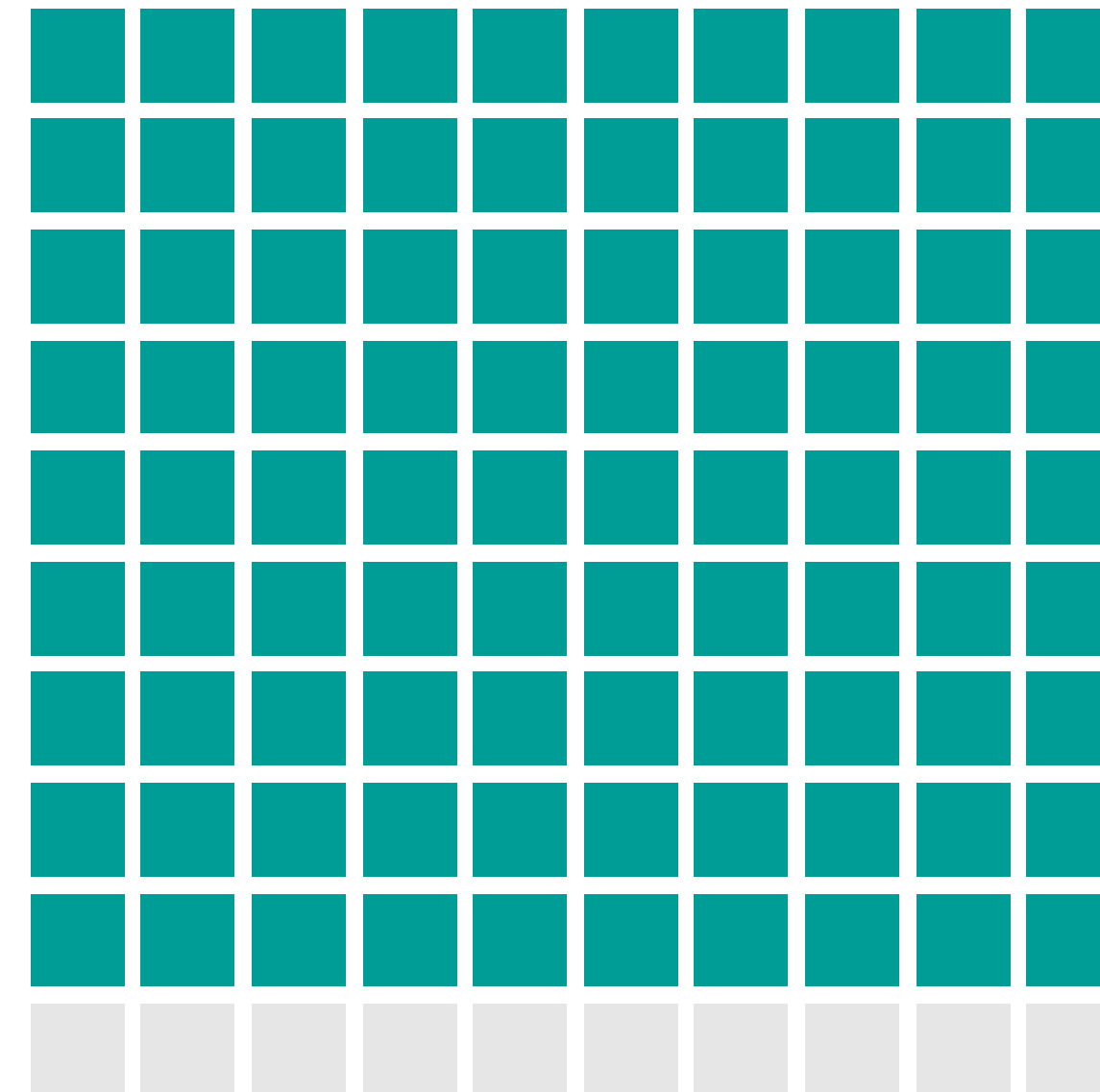
3 learners in Spring 2026 – excluded (in progress)

Cohort Breakdown

- 52 total learners across closed cohorts
- 47 successfully completed CompTIA A+ pathway
- 3 transferred to BHCC IT certificate / degree programs
- 5 did not complete



EACH SQUARE = 1% (10×10 = 100%)



Completed (90%)

Did Not Complete (10%)

Closed cohorts only. In-progress cohorts excluded from completion-rate calculation.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Roxbury Community College

Roxbury Crossing, Massachusetts | Public 2-year, urban (HSI / minority-serving)

- Roxbury Community College is a public, urban, minority-serving institution in Roxbury Crossing, Boston.
- RCC serves about 2,100 students and is one of the most demographically distinctive community colleges in Massachusetts, with a student population that is predominantly Black, Latino, and students of color.
- Roughly two-thirds of RCC students are women, and most attend part-time.
- RCC's Center for Smart Building Technology is a regional workforce hub focused on clean energy, building automation, HVAC, and building-performance careers.
- The center offers stackable pathways that begin with Building Science Principles and continue into more advanced options such as Building Automation Controls Technician and Building Analyst training, while also connecting to a strong high school pipeline through Smart Building Careers.

AT A GLANCE

Enrollment
~2,100 students

Setting
Urban / Roxbury Crossing

Minority-serving
Yes (federally designated)

Largest demographic
Black (~43%)

Women
67%

IPEDS year
2023-24

COLLEGE DEMOGRAPHICS

Roxbury Community College

Roxbury Crossing, Massachusetts | Public 2-year, urban (HSI / minority-serving) | IPEDS 2023-24

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

2,044

undergraduates

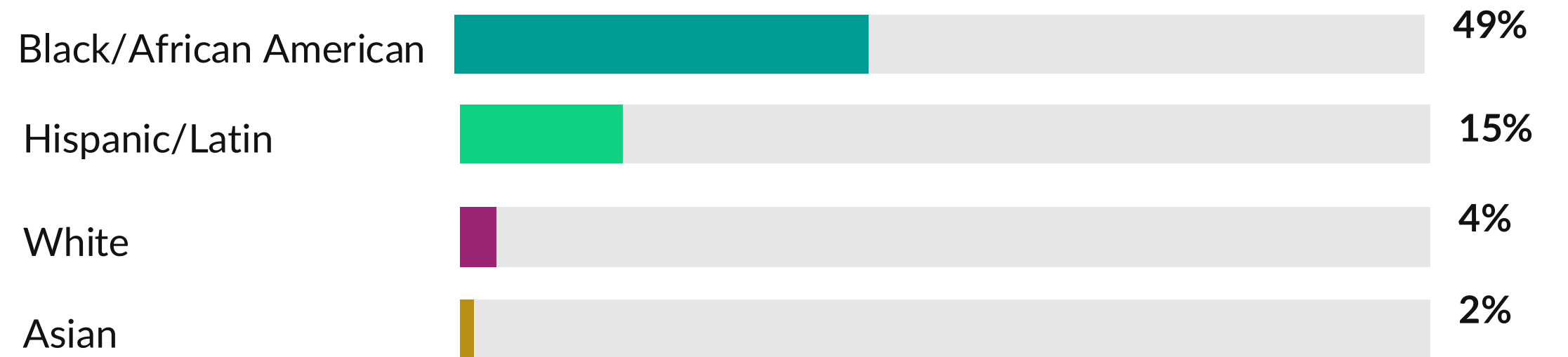
GENDER



69% Women | 31% Men

 Women  Men

RACE / ETHNICITY



Source: [NCES IPEDS Unit 167631](#) | Bars scaled relative to 100% of enrollment.

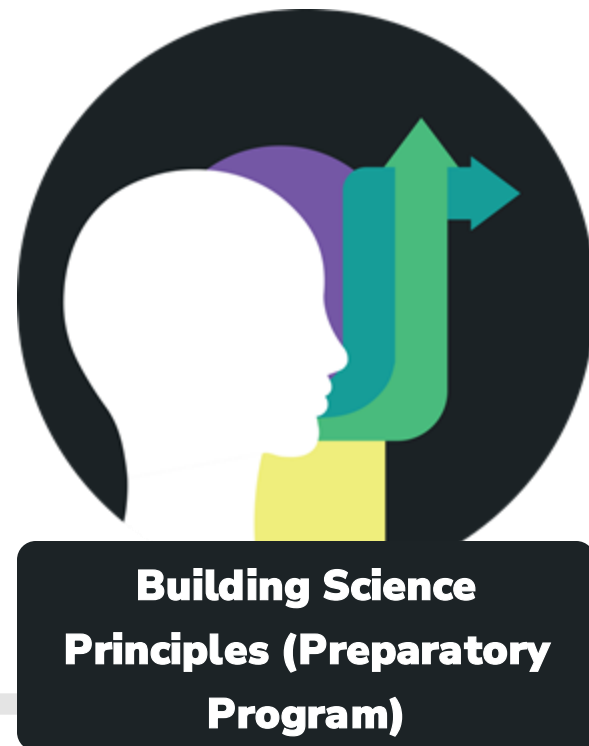
Foundation Building Science Principles

A Microcredential Foundation for Building Performance Careers

Building Science Principles provides the whole-system foundation that underpins every building performance career, equipping learners with core knowledge in energy efficiency, air quality, HVAC systems, insulation, ventilation, and building envelope principles. Participants develop the technical vocabulary and conceptual grounding shared across facility operations, energy auditing, and building automation work, while building the confidence to evaluate comfort, health, and performance in real-world building environments. Upon completion, learners earn the BPI Building Science Principles Certificate of Knowledge, the formal prerequisite for BPI Building Analyst Technician certification and a recognized signal of readiness for professionals entering construction, real estate, facilities management, and the clean energy sector.

CREDENTIALS EARNED

-  Energy Efficiency Fundamentals
-  HVAC Systems Overview
-  Building Envelope & Insulation
-  Ventilation & Indoor Air Quality
-  Energy Audits & Retrofitting
-  Renewable Energy Integration
-  Building Codes & Standards
-  Self Directed Learning



Validated by regional employers:

4 WEEKS | IN-PERSON | PART-TIME

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

WORKFORCE

HVAC Helper
Wage: \$42,000/yr

Building Analyst Technician
Wage: \$54,534/yr

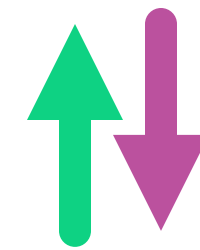
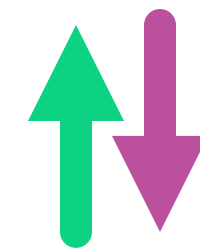
Building Maintenance Technician
Wage: \$54,200/yr

CONTINUED LEARNING

Building Automation Control Microcredential Pathway

Building Analyst Microcredential Pathway

Building Operator Microcredential Pathway



This is a preparatory program for the other pathways.

Roxbury CC | BSP (Building Science Principles)



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

8 in 10 learners completed; HS cohorts drove the highest performance

Completion Rate

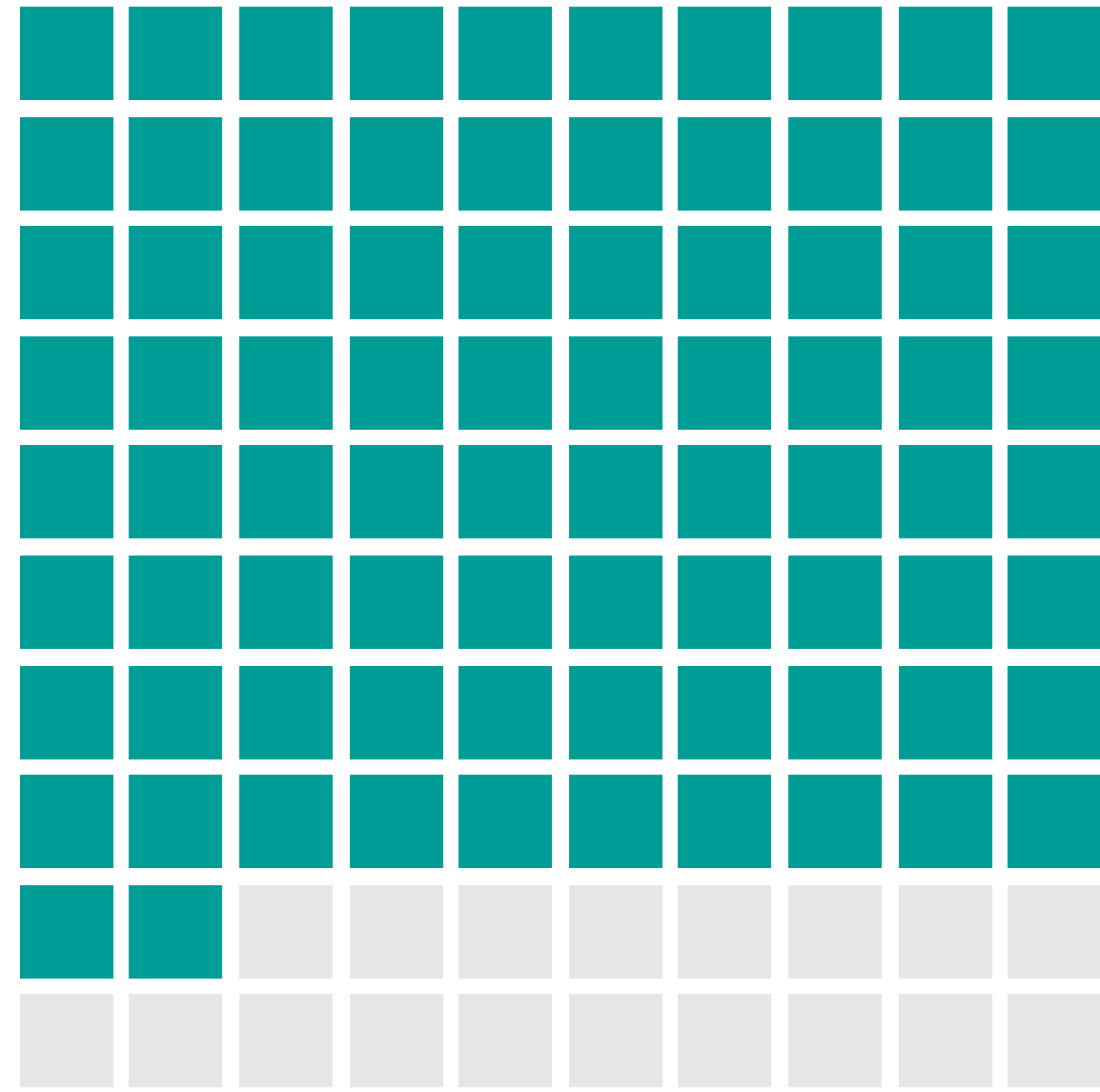
82%

41 completed / 50 enrolled (closed cohorts)
19 learners in Spring 2026 HS cohort – excluded (in progress)

Cohort Breakdown

- Adult Spring 2025: 8 of 13 completed (62%)
- HS Spring 2025: 20 of 22 completed (91%)
- HS Fall 2025: 13 of 15 completed (87%)
- HS average across closed: 33 of 37 (89%)

EACH SQUARE = 1% (10×10 = 100%)



Completed (82%) Did Not Complete (18%)

Closed cohorts only. In-progress cohorts excluded from completion-rate calculation.



Community Health Worker Certificate

A Micro-Pathway to Become a Community Health Worker

designed with
Education Design Lab

CREDENTIALS EARNED



Community Health Technology



Community Health Certificate



Empathy



Resilience +



Problem Solving



125 hour Internship



Validated by regional employers:

- Bronx Care
- Montefiore
- Mt. Sinai
- Urban Health Plan
- Inquisit Health
- CAMBA
- Henry Street Settlement
- Bronx Works
- Black Health

WORKFORCE

Community Health Worker

Wage: \$41,550/yr

Community Health Worker Supervisor

Wage: \$52,290/yr

Healthcare Manager
Healthcare Social Worker

Wage: \$61,460/yr +

CONTINUED LEARNING

A.S. in Human Services or Public Health

M.A. in Social Work or Public Health

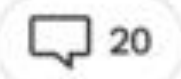
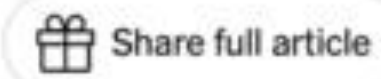
FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

4-6 months, full time/part time | Offered in noncredit | 6 credits apply towards higher credential



Student success

One inspiring success story comes from Destina Garcia, who participated in this pathway through an employer-sponsored apprenticeship program and was featured in *The New York Times* for advancing her career through LaGuardia's Community Health Worker Apprenticeship.



She went back to Mr. Chambers, who relayed more tricks of the trade. Ask him, “How are your children?” They live in Florida, the man replied. He hadn’t talked to them in a long time. He felt that he hadn’t been the best father. His emergency contact number, for his son, was disconnected. But Ms. Garcia found a daughter living in Orlando, who got her father a cellphone and helped him keep appointments. Things went better for a while.

Ms. Garcia took on more cases as her apprenticeship continued. She got two raises, bringing her salary up to \$42,000 per year. This is a hallmark of the apprentice system. Unlike interns, who are often exploited by employers, apprentices are paid more as they advance in experience and skill.

Summary: This program is designed to prepare opportunity seekers to model, synthesize, analyze, and present large data sets for business decision making. This is designed to reach a range of opportunity seekers from those who are new to the industry to those looking to gain skills and upskill within the industry. This provides a stepping stone or on-ramp into the existing CCL or BAS.

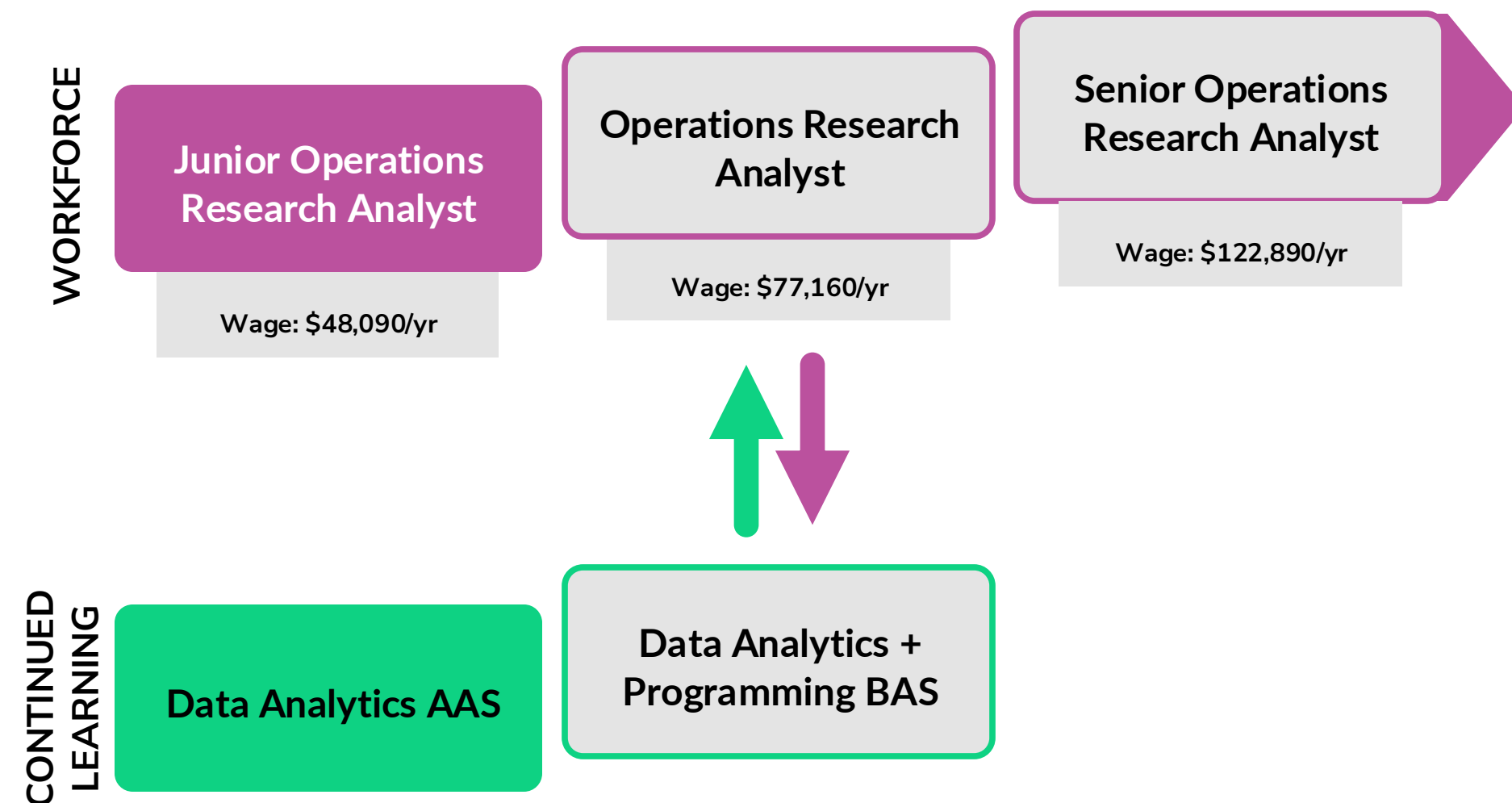
CREDENTIALS EARNED



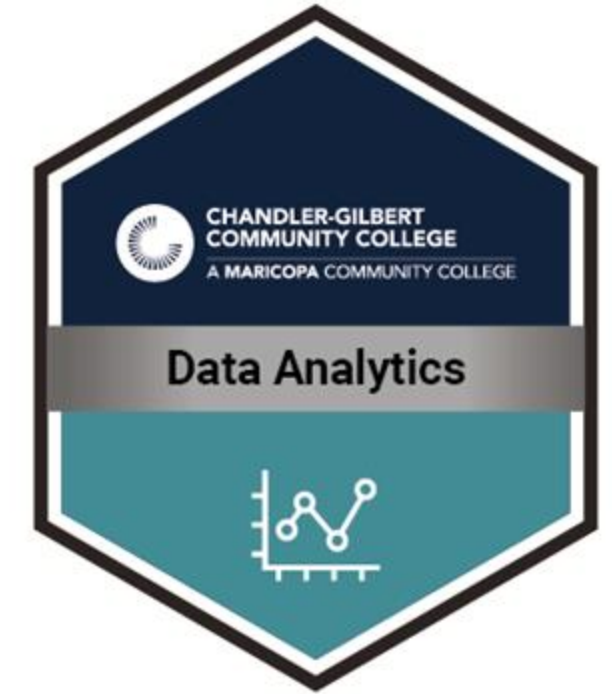
Validated by regional employers:

- Deloitte
- Blueyonder
- DriveTime
- Maricopa District & Colleges

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Asynchronous Interviews with 2 Completers



Data Analytics
Micro-Credential Pathway
maricopa.badges.parchment.com

Additional Quotes from Completers



Kingsborough Community College independently designed two new micro-pathways using the same tools and resources introduced through its collaboration with Education Design Lab, demonstrating real institutional capacity to sustain and scale innovation beyond the initial project.

“It [the micro-pathway] really impacted my career because I’m currently working with voters in the community. The guest services training has really helped me work with individuals, understand what to say and what not to say, and it has taught me to be a good listener so I can find out what’s most important to the voters.”

-Richard Weldon | Certified Guest Service Professional

“I felt that this micro-credential program could help me build my interpersonal and communication skills. Since completing the program, I’ve moved into a more customer-facing role where I work closely with internal customers in a general office setting. This training has really helped me strengthen my communication and customer service skills, as well as my overall confidence in those interactions.”

-Betty Craig | Certified Guest Service Professional

Final thoughts

- The Lab is excited about the opportunity to partner with New Jersey to **design and implement high-quality, in-demand pathways** that expand access, respond to employer need, and create stronger routes to economic mobility for learners across the state.
- New Jersey is well positioned to be a **national leader** by building pathways that are learner-centered, employer-validated, and connected to continued learning and quality jobs.
- **All New Jersey community colleges have the opportunity to participate** in this work, with the understanding that colleges are at varying levels of capacity.
- We see real potential to **leverage the pathways work done to date** across colleges, state leaders, and employer partners in New Jersey to drive implementation - *designing pathways that are practical, scalable, and built for long-term impact.*

Thank You!

To learn more about the Community College Growth Engine,
please visit eddesignlab.org

Rachel Kahn: *Senior Director, Strategy and Impact*

Community College Growth Engine

Email: rkahn@eddesignlab.org

