

November 2023

In partnership with the Education Design Lab, the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Montana's public two-year colleges, announced the launch of the **Year-to-Career Initiative**. Through an EDL facilitated design process, colleges, employers, learners, and local stakeholders are collaboratively designing skills-focused micro-pathway programs to meet the state's growing workforce needs.

Through this initiative, **12 Montana colleges** will undergo a two-year transformation to enhance their role as sustainable engines of economic growth and regional talent suppliers. Participating institutions will establish **12-20 micro-pathways** –stackable credentials that can be flexibly earned in less than a year. These programs will put learners both on the path to an associate degree or to immediate employment in high-demand fields across the state.



The shared vision for our *Year-to-Career* micro-pathway is to collaboratively design and market pathways to increase the value of career-connected, workforce education and training across the state Montana by streamlining our ability to connect our students to pathways that lead to industry recognized credentials that result in sustainable wage jobs.

Insights from the Occupation Selection Survey

- Three primary sectors we will design pathways around are **healthcare, education and technology, trades, & tourism (T3)**.
- The top four occupations identified as having the greatest need are **medical assistant, welder, computer support specialist, and IT support specialist**.
- Some of things to consider in order to meet the needs of employers and l(earners) include **securing tuition funding, identifying qualified instructors, modality & scheduling, and how to build a sustainable talent pipeline**.

Current Design Phase

Pre-Design

Identify project goals, understand institutional processes, sector and occupation selection, and l(earner) profiles.

What's Next?

- OCHE and EDL hosts employer and student discovery sessions at Missoula College.
- The prioritization of sectors and occupations, by assessing workforce data, trends, and employer needs.
- Creating l(earner) profiles to better understand the populations we intend serve and identify the support resources they will need to successfully complete a micro-pathway program.