

Middle Skills Pathways and Beyond

Raising the Ceiling on Programs of Study and
Entry-Level Occupations

Agenda

- We highly encourage you to use the Q&A and Chat Box
- This webinar is being recorded
 - The slide deck link will be shared in the chat

Introductions

Background and Related Projects

Framework and Terminology

Deep Dive: Accelerate U

Q&A



Juan Jose Gonzalez,
Education Systems Center



Aarti Dhupelia,
National Louis University

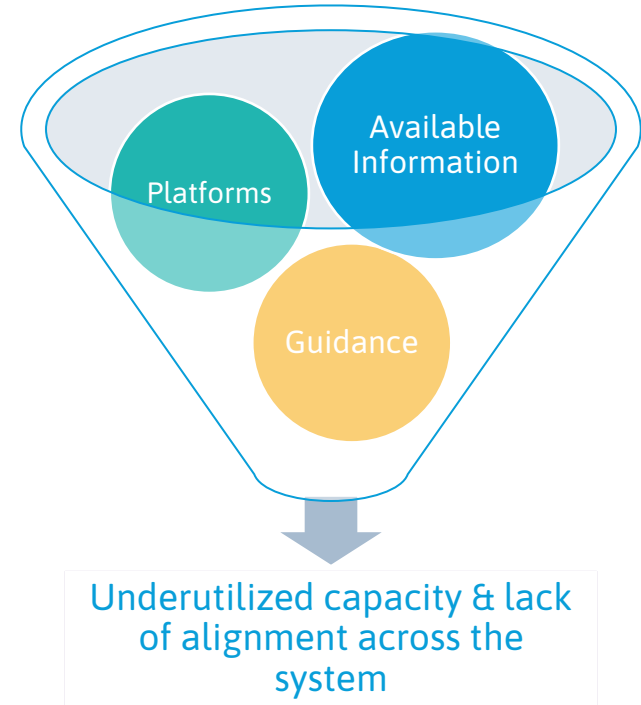


Thackston Lundy,
National Louis University

















Background on Middle Skills Pathway and Related Projects

Progressive Pathways in the Chicagoland Region: Key Challenges Addressed

1. Information available is often incomplete, out-of-date, not helpful for decision-making, not getting to the right people
2. Platforms for potential participants lack comprehensive information to inform decisions
3. Guidance is predicated on “college for all” and thus not inclusive of a range of options; guides are underprepared for providing comprehensive guidance on postsecondary options



Model Programs of Study

<p>DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT</p> <p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources</p> <p>April 2022</p> 	<p>DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT</p> <p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Architecture, Construction, and Energy</p> <p>April 2022</p> 	<p>DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT</p> <p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Arts and Communications</p> <p>April 2022</p> 	<p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Education</p> <p>October 2022</p> 	<p>DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT</p> <p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Finance and Business Services</p> <p>April 2022</p> 	<p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Health Sciences and Technology</p> <p>October 2022</p> 	<p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Information Technology</p> <p>October 2022</p> 	<p>State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guide: Manufacturing and Engineering</p> <p>October 2022</p> 
							

IDENTIFY
HIGH-PRIORITY
OCCUPATIONS

DETERMINE
PROMISING
CREDENTIALS
& MAP
STACKABLE
DEGREES/
CERTIFICATES

IDENTIFY
STRATEGIC
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
COURSES

MAP
SECONDARY TO
POSTSECONDARY
SEQUENCE

DEFINE
RELATED
TECHNICAL
COMPETENCIES



Why Develop Statewide Model Programs of Study?

The primary purposes and goals for the Model Programs of Study Guides are to:

- Provide guidance and exemplars for local programs to adopt or customize as they develop programs of study for approval as part of the [Perkins V Plan](#).
- [Identify priority dual credit and early college courses](#) that are [foundational to the industry area](#) and well-situated for statewide scaling and articulation.
- Define the [competencies that should be sequenced](#) across a program of study course sequence to prepare students for the future of work in that industry area.
- 8 • Identify entry points for employers to support coursework and related experiences.

Illinois Demand Occupations Training List Framework (Adopted March 2021)



EDUCATION

A minimum typical entry education level of High School diploma + moderate OJT and maximum typical entry level of Bachelors Degree + long-term OJT



**JOB
OPENINGS**

Projected annual openings equal to at least 0.01% of statewide employment (646 annual openings)

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

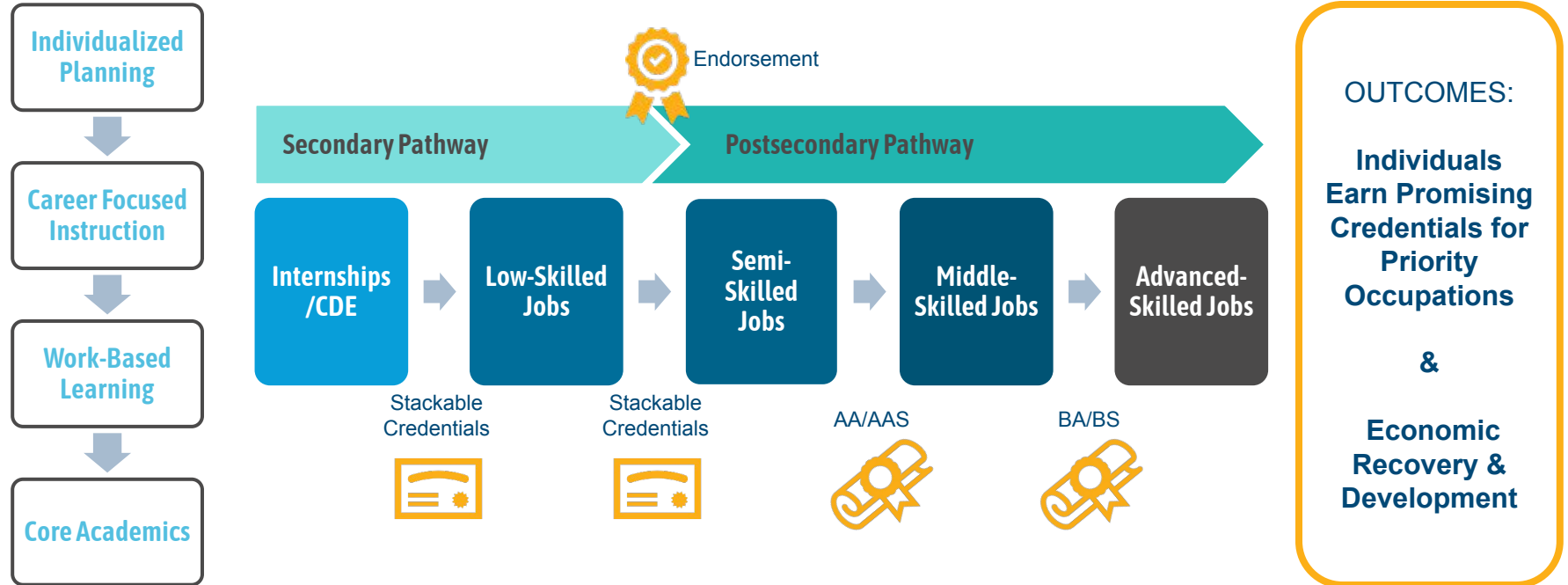


WAGES

A median wage of 85% of the Living Wage for 1 adult & 1 child (85% of \$26.48=\$22.51)

Framework and Terminology

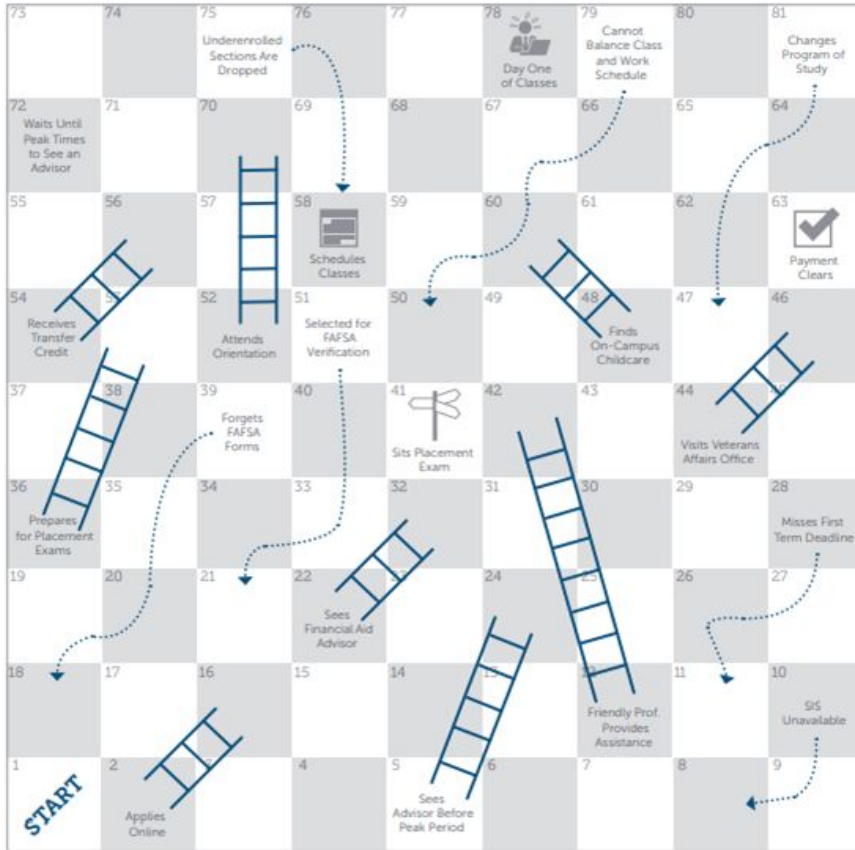
Career Pathways Framework: too linear?



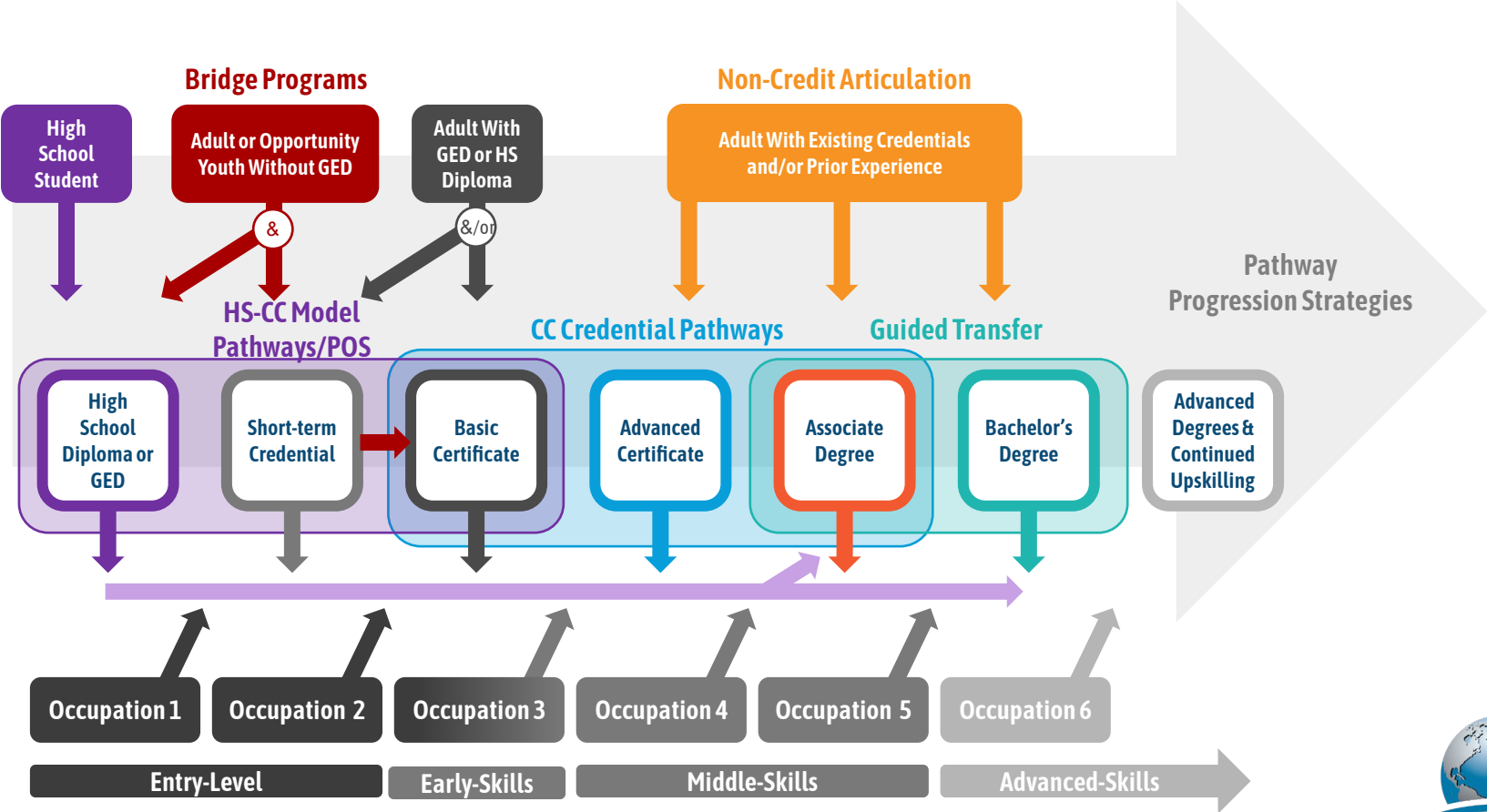
System Design vs. Student Reality

EAB Infographic: Is your enrollment process a game of Chutes and Ladders?

<https://eab.com/insights/infographic/community-college/is-your-enrollment-process-a-game-of-chutes-and-ladders/>



Proposed Pathways System Framework



Criteria for Benchmarking Worthwhile Pathway Occupations (vs than Entry Level Jobs)



EDUCATION

What minimum typical entry education level is needed for the role or industry field



JOB
OPENINGS

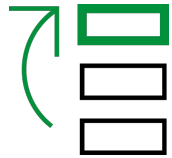
Make sure occupations have sufficient projected annual openings



WAGES

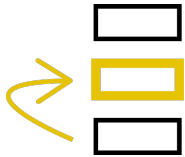
Set a wage threshold based on living wage criteria for a specific family size

Occupational Framework Definitions



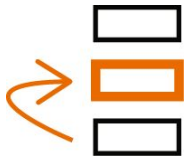
High Priority Occupation

An occupation that is both an In-Demand and Living Wage occupation.



Gateway Occupation

An In-Demand occupation that, while not a Living Wage occupation, either (i) provides advancement opportunities into career ladder roles that pay a Living Wage, or (ii) provides necessary experience for a subsequent Stackable Credential that leads to and prepares for a High-Priority Occupation.



Recommended focus for additional career pathway support systems to provide career ladder advancement



In-Demand

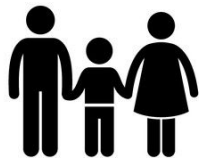
An occupation with positive growth potential based upon labor market information that includes Department of Labor 10-year growth projections and employer input.



Living Wage

An hourly wage level that, at its median for that role, is at least 85% of the “Living Wage” threshold for 1 Adult and one Child in the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin Metro Statistical Area, based on MIT’s Living Wage Calculator

Living Wage = The minimum salary you would need in order to cover the cost of living expenses (i.e. pay all your bills) in your community based on typical expenses for that area.



Single Child



Family with 2 Children



Big Family

Depends on 1) how many adults and children are in your family 2) how many adults are working 3) where you live.

A very popular tool is the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) by MIT, which breaks down the living wage by family size and region of the country. Updates Annually.

Pathway Progression Strategies

Coherent strategies that incorporate program sequencing, instructional design models, articulation systems, and related participant supports structured to facilitate an individual's entry into and movement through stackable credentials culminating in a Promising Credential and Living-wage employment.

Bridge Programs:

Prepare adults with limited academic or English skills for postsecondary, leading to in-demand, middle- and advanced-skills occupations.

Non-Credit Articulation:

Agreement between a community-based or nonprofit program provider and CCC to award credit toward a CCC Credential Pathway.

One method:
Prior Learning

Guided Transfer:

Support system for those who have or are pursuing an associate degree to transfer into a related bachelor's degree program with no or minimal credit loss.

Acceleration Strategies:

Enabling individuals to attain Promising Credentials in less time and at lower cost than through typical CCC Credential Pathway program timelines.

Prior Learning

Competency-Based Education

Model POS

Overall System Improvement Recommendations

1. Using common language and a common framework, focus public and philanthropic funders on pathways to Promising Credentials
2. Expand and accelerate development of non-credit articulation models that bridge into pathways to Promising Credentials
3. Target expansion of youth acceleration strategies (Model Programs of Study and youth apprenticeships) to increase the numbers of Black, Latinx, and low-income Chicagoans with an accessible, supported pathway to High Priority occupations
4. Create a public-private support infrastructure for additional academic help, wrap-around services, and financial support for Black, Latinx, and low-income adults to progress to High Priority Occupations along a career pathway
5. Strengthen and expand Guided Transfer models for High Priority occupations typically requiring a bachelor's degree for entry

Work Since 2019

Provide technical assistance and support connections to organizations that propel students along pathways to careers, including CareerPathways.net, industry sector partnerships, and community college systems for program articulation.

Create a community of practice among Bridges Middle-Skills grantees to share best practices and opportunities for continuous improvement among grant recipients beyond the convenings.

Continued deep landscape analysis of middle skill career pathways in Chicago that lead to industry credentials and degrees associated with “priority occupations”

- Phase 1: Focus on five sectors: IT, Health Sciences, Manufacturing, Education/Childcare, TDL
- Phase 2: Focus on five new sectors: FBS; Architecture, Construction, and Energy (ACE); Arts & Communications; AFNR; Culinary Arts; and HPS (non-Education)



Accelerate U

National Louis University





National Louis University (NLU)

Middle Skills Pathways and Beyond: Raising the Ceiling on Programs of Study and Entry-Level Occupations

February 28, 2022



NLU Overview

An institution committed to serving diverse students....

- Non-profit university founded 135 years ago to educate Chicago's immigrants
- 70 programs across 5 colleges
- 10K students served, including 4K undergrads
- 70/70/70 institution: Undergraduates are approximately 70% Pell-eligible, 70% First-Gen, and 70% Black & Latinx

...and serving the continuum of undergraduates to create multiple paths to economic mobility

- **The Undergraduate College at NLU** – driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and sustainable employment, for:
 - *Traditional-aged first-time undergraduates,*
 - *Students directly transferring associate's degrees from community colleges, and*
 - *Returning adult degree completers*
- **Accelerate U at NLU** – driving rapid employment through short-term, credit-bearing, stackable credentials for *un- or underemployed adults and recent high school graduates.*

AN INNOVATIVE UNDERGRADUATE MODEL

NLU's Undergraduate College (UGC) drives equity in bachelor's degree attainment and employment.

Eliminating Barriers to **Access**

- **Affordability:** \$10K/year, lowest tuition in Illinois, and zero out-of-pocket cost for lowest-income students
- **Broad Access Admissions:** 2.0+ GPA, no SAT/ACT
- **Convenient Schedule:** Blended face-to-face/online, virtual, and fully online options

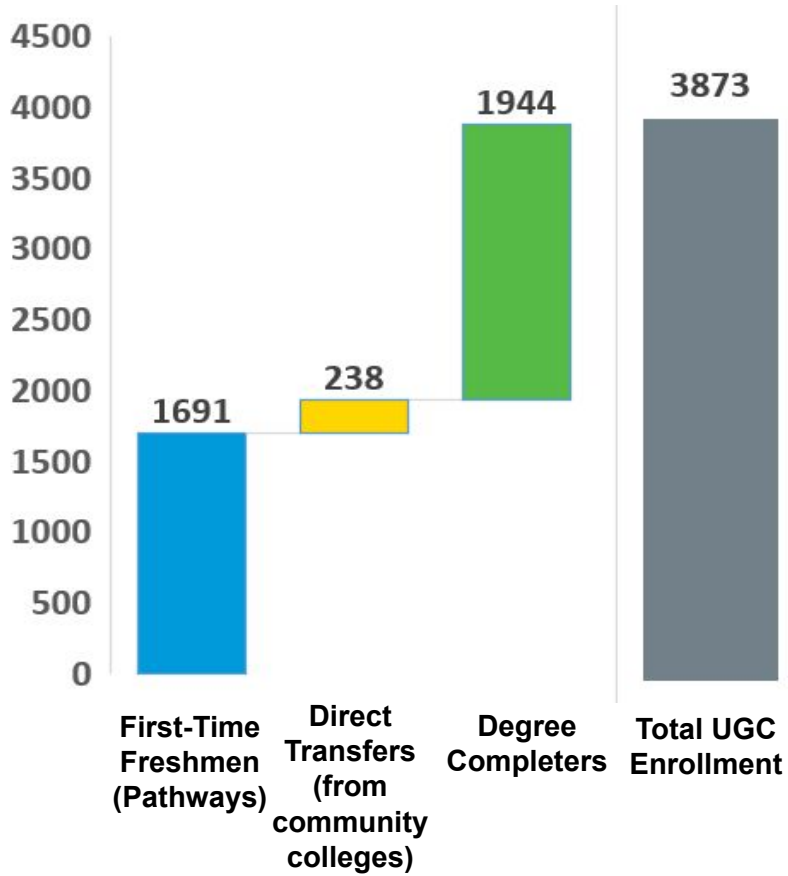
Eliminating Barriers to **Success**

- Clear and well-rounded **course pathways** to degrees
- Personalized, active, technology-enabled **class experience**
- **Data-informed** student **success coaching**
- Robust and accessible **wraparound supports**
- **Embedded career** preparation and placement

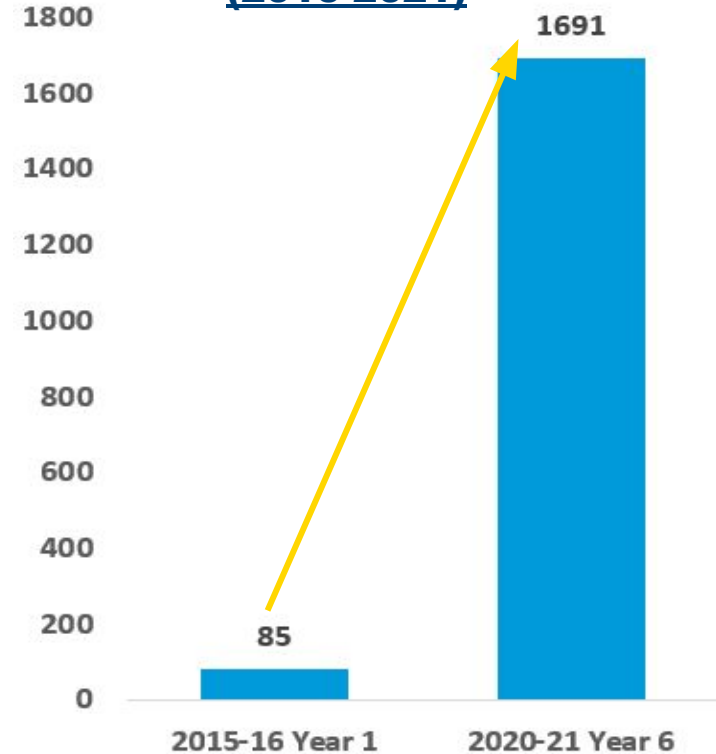


UGC SERVES ~4K STUDENTS AND HAS RAPIDLY GROWN

UGC Total Enrollment (2021)



UGC Pathways Enrollment (2016-2021)





ACCELERATE U at NLU
credentials. connections. careers.

**“Job-First” Higher
Education:
A New Model for
Economic Mobility**

THE PROBLEM

Chicago needs better bridges to economic mobility



Percentage of 2020 CPS grads who did not enroll in 4 or 2 year colleges right after graduation



Percentage of 20-24 year olds in Chicago out of work and out of school



Annual cost to Chicago due to racial gaps in higher education completion and employment

1. UChicago Consortium. College During The Pandemic: Immediate Enrollment and Retention of CPS Graduates in Fall 2020. April 2021
2. UChicago Consortium, To and Through https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/hs/2020/details/#/college-enrollment/breakdown?att_inst=inst-any
3. UIC Great Cities Institute, https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/OutofSchoolOutofWorkData_May2019.pdf

A NEW SOLUTION

A Pathbreaking “Job-First Higher Education” Model

Employer Focused

- Partner with employers to build learning experiences that are aligned to actual in-demand, upwardly mobile jobs.
- Solves employer need for efficient diverse talent pipeline.

Learner Focused

- Training is 3-6 months long.
- Online + in-person: designed around learner’s lives.
- A dedicated coach, wraparound services/supports, and a rich peer and professional cohort experience.

Develops “work ready” employees

- Develop technical and “durable” career readiness skills.
- Training includes 4-8 weeks of on-the-job learning (externships)
- Employers agree to interview or placement for job post externship

Affordable

- All programs are less than ~\$6,000 and Pell-eligible.
- Minimize or eliminate debt load, especially for those facing biggest socio-economic barriers.
- Learners earn stipends during their externships

Provides Stackability

- Up to 30 college credits and a clear pathway to earning an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.
- Learners earn an industry-recognized credential.

OUR LEARNER “PERSONAS”



Recent HS Grad

- *21 years old*
- *Not ready for 4 year college*
- *Eager to do meaningful work that will support her family*
- *Mom was a nurse and she’s interested in healthcare.*



Career-Starter

- *28 years old with some college*
- *Tried college for 2 semesters*
- *Works in an Amazon fulfillment center – ready for a challenge*
- *Has college aspirations, but wants FT salary/benefits now.*



Career-Changer

- *43 year old career-changer*
- *Has associate’s degree*
- *Launched a small consulting biz that slowed in COVID-19*
- *Wants to build new IT skills as quickly as possible.*

WE LOOK FOR THREE THINGS IN ALL OUR LEARNERS:

1. HS degree or GED
2. Desire to start a new job
3. Motivation and commitment to do the work to complete our program

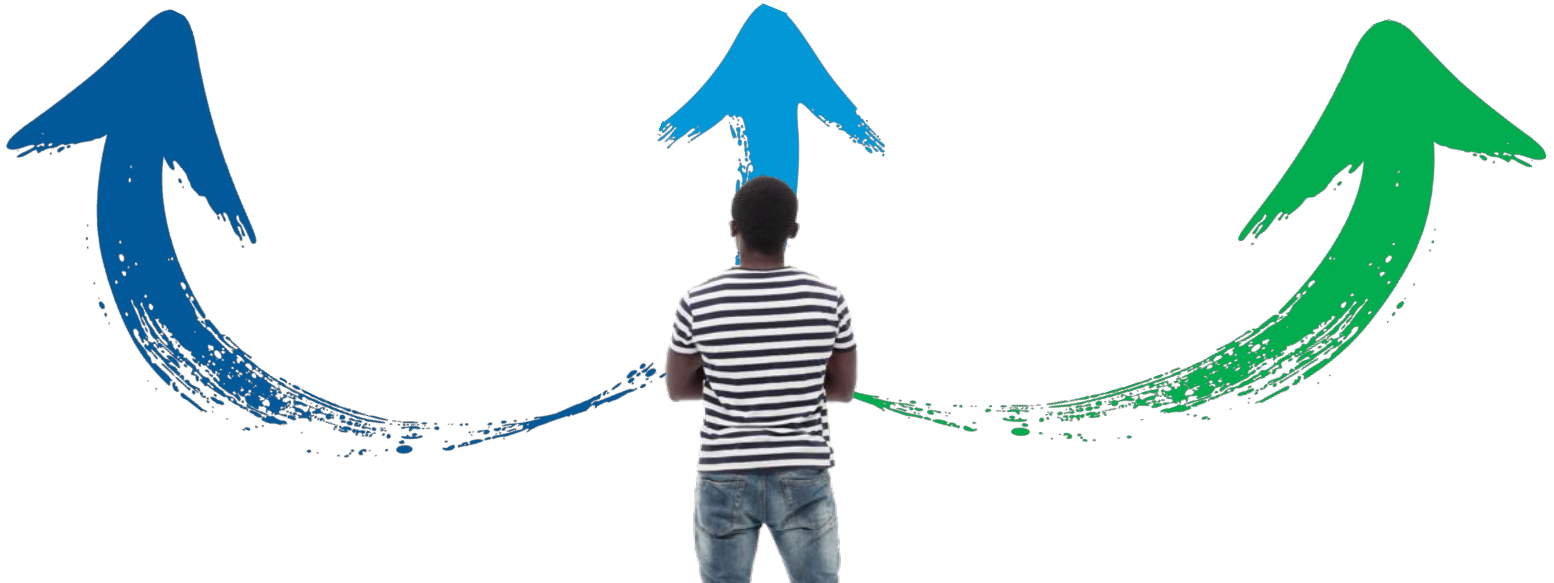
MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Pathways available after credential completion – credits stack!

Work towards a Bachelor's degree in the same or different field.

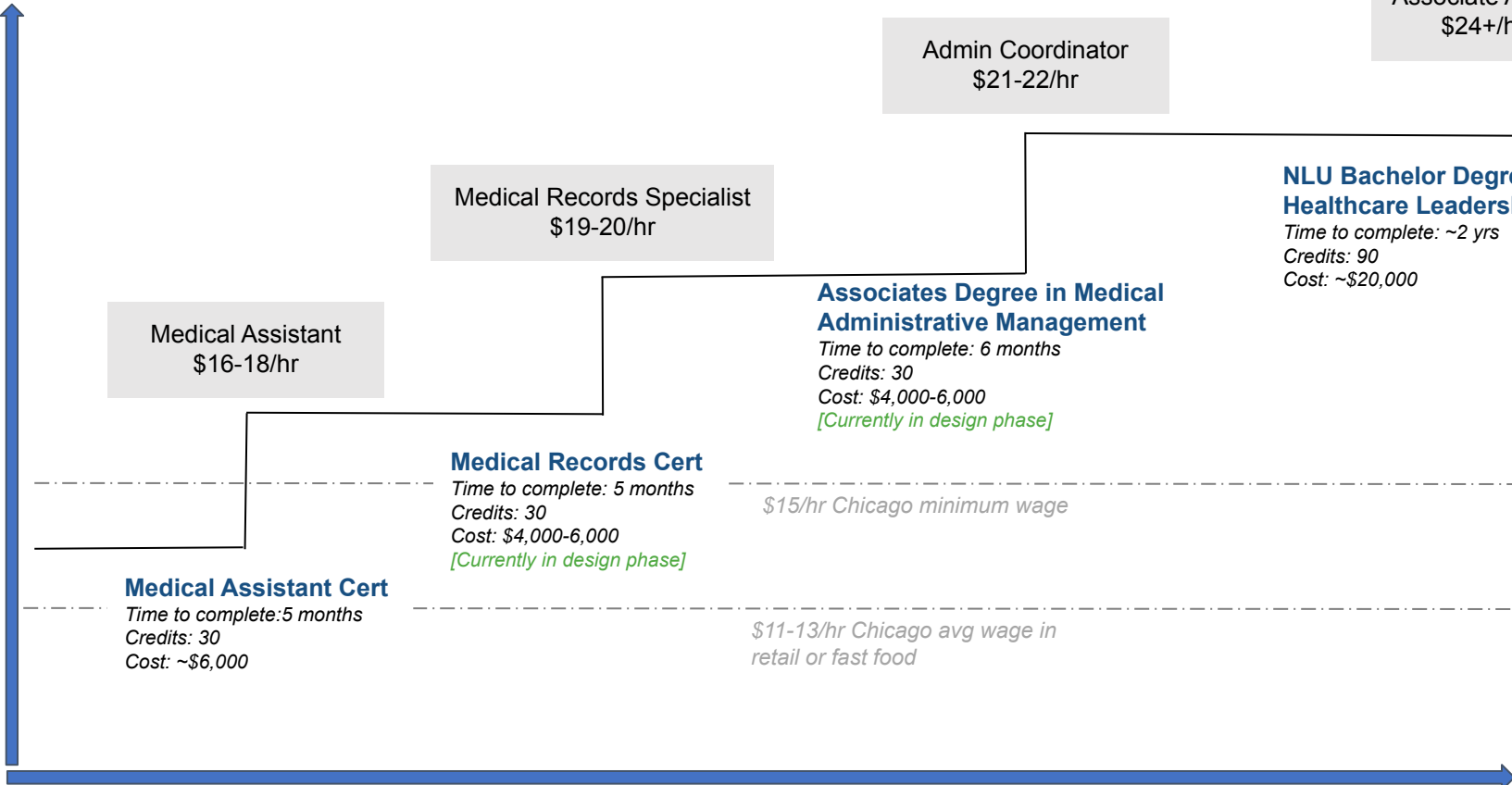
Work towards an Associate's degree in the same or different field.

Work on *another credential* and earn additional college credit.



AN EMERGING NLU HEALTHCARE PATHWAY

Earning Potential (\$)



Medical Assistant
\$16-18/hr

Medical Records Specialist
\$19-20/hr

Admin Coordinator
\$21-22/hr

Hospital Associate Admin
\$24+/hr

Medical Assistant Cert
Time to complete: 5 months
Credits: 30
Cost: ~\$6,000

Medical Records Cert
Time to complete: 5 months
Credits: 30
Cost: \$4,000-6,000
[Currently in design phase]

Associates Degree in Medical Administrative Management
Time to complete: 6 months
Credits: 30
Cost: \$4,000-6,000
[Currently in design phase]

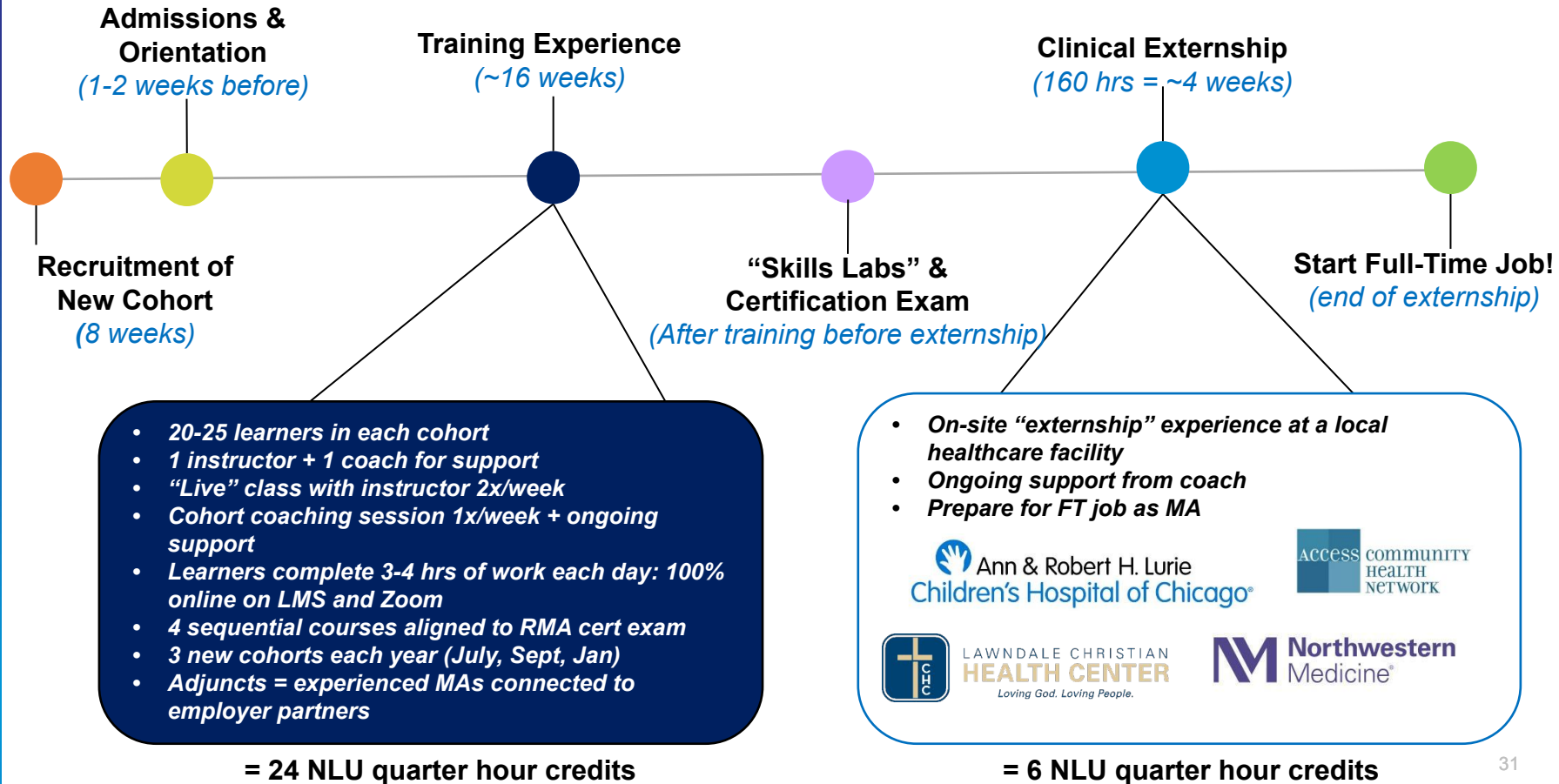
NLU Bachelor Degree in Healthcare Leadership
Time to complete: ~2 yrs
Credits: 90
Cost: ~\$20,000

\$15/hr Chicago minimum wage

\$11-13/hr Chicago avg wage in retail or fast food

Time

THE MEDICAL ASSISTANT TRAINING MODEL



OUR LEARNERS (JULY 2021 PILOT)

- Basic Demographics
 - 88% Black/Hispanic
 - 75% Pell-eligible
 - 91% female
 - 20 years old
 - Middle two quartiles (50%) of HS graduating class
 - 0-1 year of college experience
- Key student recruitment channels
 - Partnerships with HSs for alum
 - Chicago employers (Lurie)
 - Word of mouth
 - NLU applicants/Pathways



OUR EARLY IMPACT INDICATORS

	Summer (July 2021)	Fall (Sept 2021)	Winter (Jan 2022)
# of Enrolled Learners	20 learners	13 learners	26 learners
# of Learners Completing Training	16 learners (80%)	9 learners (69%)	22 learners (85%)
Grades (C average or higher)	81%	88%	95%
Externship Completion (of those who began externship)	15 learners (94% of completers; 75% of starters)	<i>TBD, March 2022</i>	<i>TBD, May 2022</i>
FT Hire or Medical Asst Job Offer In-Hand	15 learners (94% of completers; 75% of starters)	<i>TBD, April 2022</i>	<i>TBD, June 2022</i>

LESSONS LEARNED & AREAS OF FOCUS

Improve the Learning Experience

- **Coach + Instructor Coordination is Key.** Cohorts saw success when coach/instructors pairs met weekly, reviewed course progress, and developed actionable plans of support.
- **Learners crave (and need) in-person instruction.** Learners want more time in-person with their instructor.
- **Increase learner retention.** We've lost more learners than we anticipated. It is critical that we identify students' barriers early/quickly and offer aligned supports before the student disengages and/or falls behind.
- **Re-evaluate Content Sequencing and RMA test prep.** The order of course content and the test preparation overall can be improved to prepare learners for the RMA exam.

Grow and Continued to Develop Our Team

- **In-house Subject Matter Expertise.** In Spring 2022, we'll hire someone internal to build tracks, refine the model, hire adjuncts, and manage externships.
- **Great teaching matters most.** We are developing hiring processes and support systems to make sure we hire great instructors and improve them.

Improve AU-Specific Supports and Systems

- **Academic Tutoring and Remediation.** We have not yet identified the personnel/structure solution for supporting students who need immediate one-on-one support with their academic courses and exam prep.
- **Learner Recruitment Pipelines & Selection Model.** Our recruitment work in Chicago is nascent and we're still refining our selection model to select for motivation/interest in a particular field.

MEASURING SUCCESS

6,500+ Learners To Employment By 2025

BUILDING eight stackable credentials by 2025 in high-growth fields such as: healthcare, IT, and business.

ENROLLING 1,800+ learners in our first credential over five years and serving 3,000+ learners a year by 2025.

LAUNCHING a stackable associates degree along with a clear pathway to an NLU bachelor's degree.

ENSURING 80% of learners earn a credential and 75% of those who earn a credential are placed in a job within three months of program completion.

SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ON OUR MIND...

- What are the most important elements of an excellent learning experience that prepares learners for job success and degree completion? How can we improve our program model?
- How do we support learners most effectively in a short period of time? What are the unique academic and support services that will ensure all learners complete the program and secure a job? And how do we identify these needs faster?
- How should Accelerate U work with employer partners to build a smooth onramp into a new job *and* ensure program completers have long-term success in employment?
- Is it better to go “deep” with a small number of large employers or “wide” with larger number of smaller employers?
- What are the right ratios of coaches, instructors and staff to provide an excellent learning experience and position Accelerate U for scale? How can technology help?
- How do we keep learning? What are the tests/experiments we can be running now to drive model design and improvement?

THANK YOU!

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APPENDIX/EXTRA SLIDES





The Undergraduate College at NLU



*Driving equity in bachelor's degree
attainment and employment*



THE PROBLEM

Black, Latinx, and low-income students have been historically marginalized in college and the labor market.

**1 out of
10**

low-income, first-generation college students graduates on-time, nationwide.

18%

of high school freshmen in Chicago go on to earn a bachelor's degree.

27%

earnings gap for Black and Latinx degree earners, who also have a 7% lower employment rate.

Racial Wealth Gap: White households in the U.S. on average have 10x more wealth than Black households and 8x more wealth than Latinx households.

RECOGNITION FOR INNOVATION, GROWTH, AND STUDENT SUCCESS



3rd largest four-year
college destination and
#1 private four-year
college destination for
CPS grads

THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education

#1 nationally in 2019 in
increase in %
under-represented
minorities served

Washington
MONTHLY

#2 Best Bang for Buck
in Midwest in 2020



CRAIN'S
CHICAGO BUSINESS.
2019 Crain's Article



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

2016 To & Through Case Study



STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES



JAIRO, Business major
Law clerk & Law school



LAURA, SPED major
CPS SPED Teacher



SIERRA, Business major
Lighthouse Review Solutions Associate



**DEVINE, Human Services
& Psychology major**
Pursuing MSW degree



**CECILIA, Computer
Science & Info Systems
major**
Accenture Software Architect



**JAUQUEZ, Criminal
Justice major**
CPD Police Recruit



PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT STUDENTS, INNOVATION, AND SCALE

Philanthropy

- New Initiatives & Innovations (Honors Program, Virtual Model Growth, Transfer Model, Eagle Brotherhood, Career Prep, etc.)
- Student Support (Emergency Fund, Completion & Suit Scholarships, Internship Stipends, Food Pantry, Credit Recovery)

Employers

- Internships and Employment Opportunities
- Guest Speakers, Mock Interviews, Job Shadows

Enrollment

- Feeder Partners (Districts, Charter Networks, CBOs)
- Scholarships & Student Support (Dream US, Pritzker, Hope Chicago)

Capabilities

- Braven Career Accelerator for Students
- Technology for Adaptive Courseware & Student Case Management
- Industry Advisory Councils & UGC Advisory Council as Critical Friends

CRITERIA FOR NEW TRACKS

