

# Ohio's Efforts to Scale a Statewide Initiative Awarding Credit for Industry Credentials

SHEEO 2024 Annual Meeting  
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# Acknowledgements

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## Our Funders

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## Our Teams

*ODHE team:* Nikki Wearly, Ben Parrot, Holly Hall

*RAND team:* Jenna Kramer, Jonah Kushner, Elaine Leigh, Chris Doss

# We have several aims for today's session

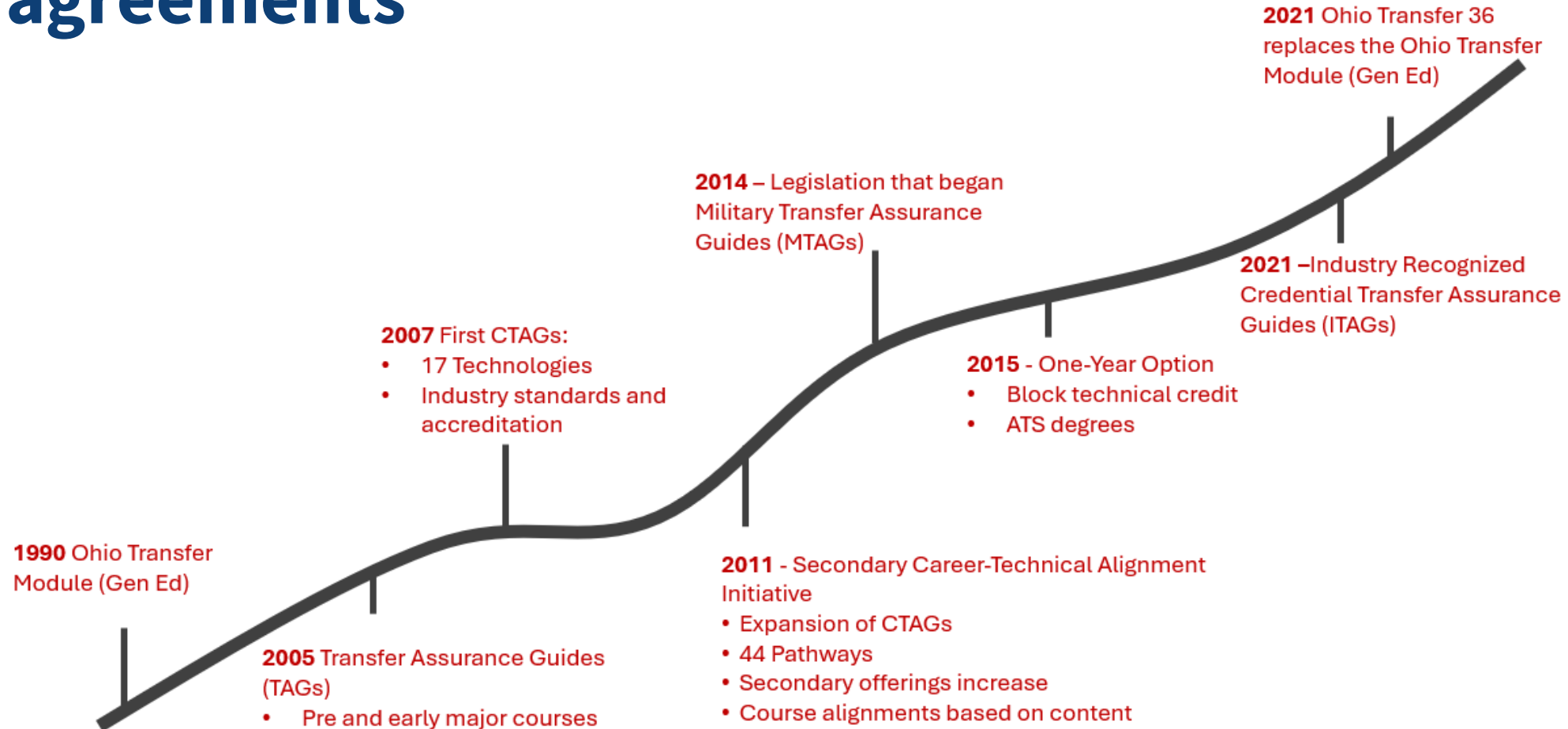
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- Provide an overview of Ohio's credit for industry recognized credential initiative (ITAGs) and broader credit articulation framework
- Offer six lessons learned for states and systems implementing similar policies
- Illustrate the value of a policymaker-researcher partnership
- Learn from you about your statewide credit for industry recognized credential efforts

# Ohio's postsecondary institutions are independent, but the state prioritizes collaboration

- 22 community and technical colleges, 14 public universities with independent authority over credit articulation
- Culture of statewide collaboration between the General Assembly, institutions, and the Ohio Board of Regents
- Ohio Transfer Promise
  - All Ohio Public Institutions of Higher Education promise to follow Ohio's statewide transfer initiatives and value transfer students as part of their institutional mission.

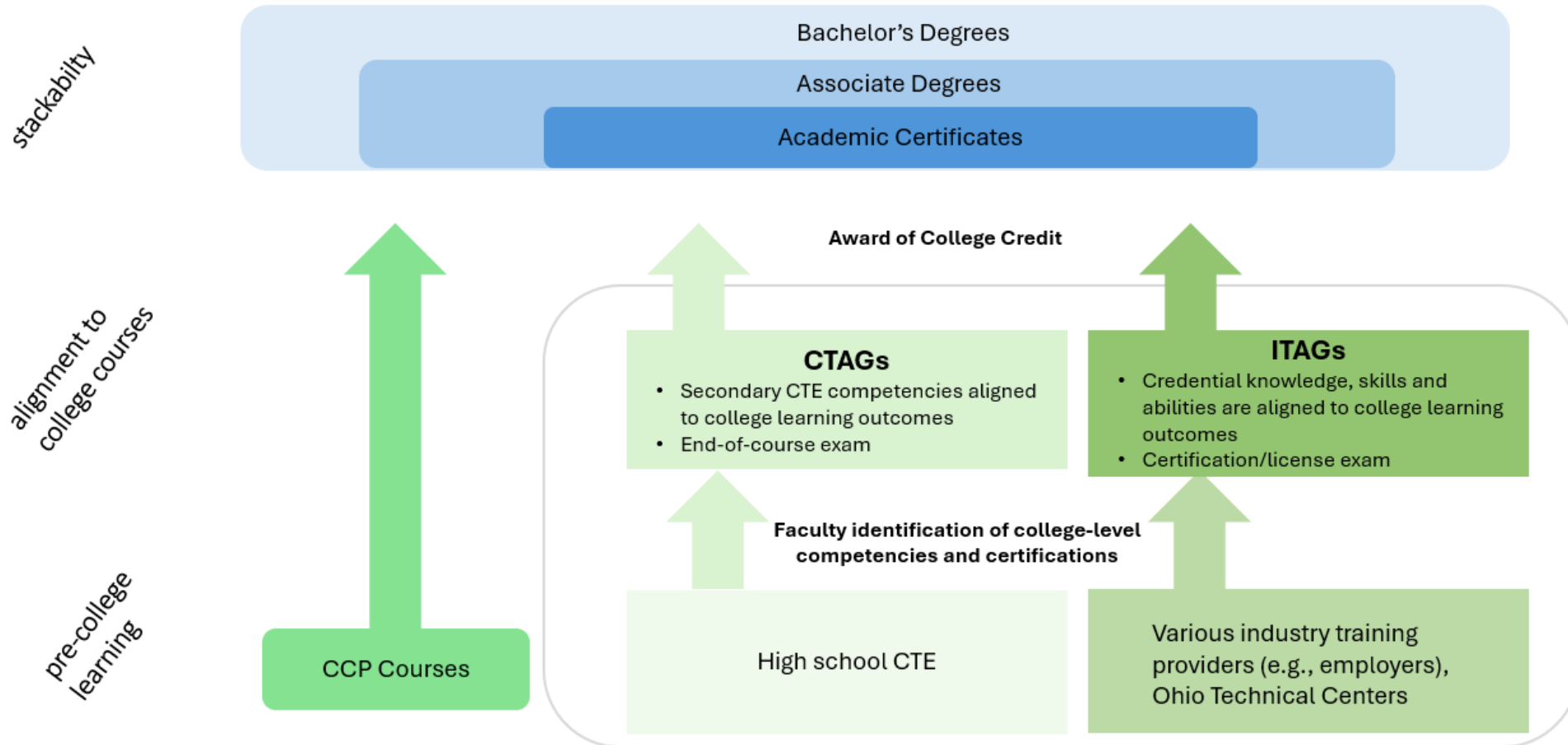
# Ohio has a long history of statewide articulation agreements



# The state's different initiatives target different types of students and programs

Initiative	Audience	Purpose	Where learning happens
<b>TAG</b>	College transfer students	To ensure applicability of community college and university courses to degrees and certificates	Community colleges and universities
<b>CTAG</b>	High school students	Award specific college course credit for career-tech courses that have been evaluated and approved by college faculty	High schools and career centers
<b>ITAG</b>	Adults holding industry credentials	Award specific college course credit for industry-recognized credentials that have been evaluated and approved by college faculty	Anywhere
<b>One-Year Option*</b>	Adults receiving technical training	Specified in Ohio law, OTC students receive 30 hours of technical credit towards a technical associate degree for completed 900+ clock hour programs that have at least 1 credential	Ohio Technical Centers

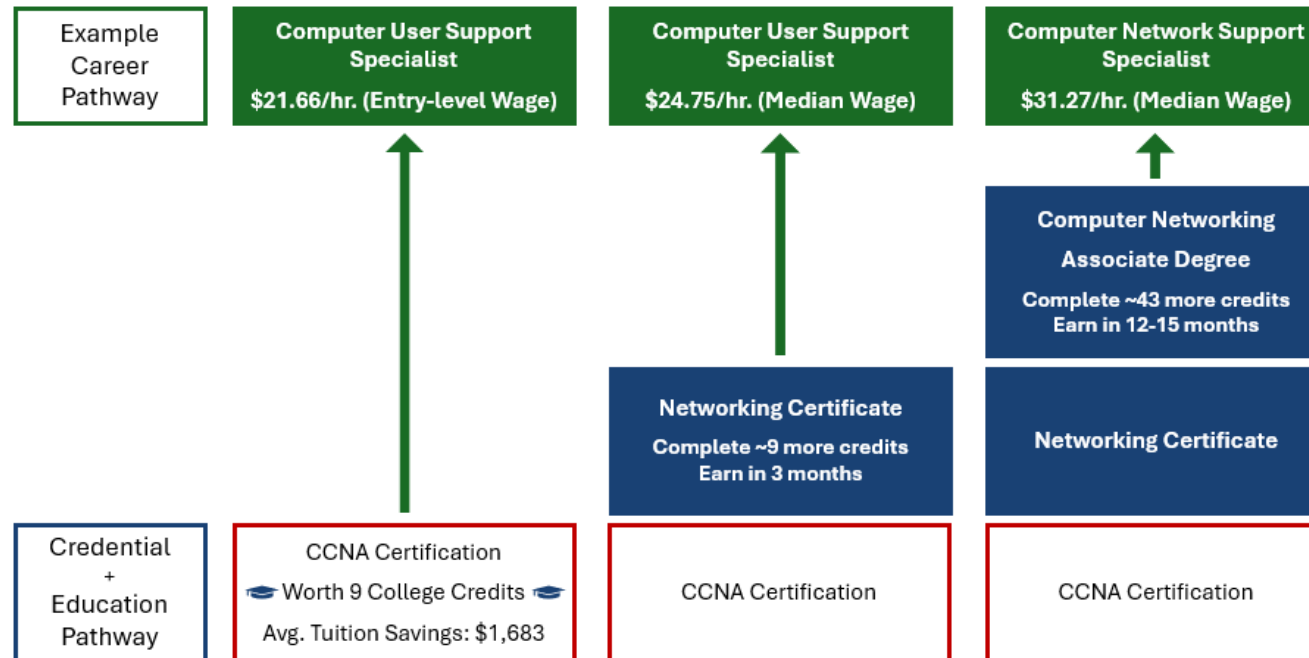
# These opportunities can offer better onramps into and through college certificate and degree programs



# We are building pathway maps that demonstrate the value of statewide credit for prior learning

## Get College Credit for Your Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) Certification!

A college certificate or degree can increase your earning potential and job opportunities. The map below shows an example of how your CCNA certification may count toward a certificate and associate degree at an Ohio public college or university. Use [this search tool](#) to see which colleges offer credit for your certification and then your college of interest for more information.

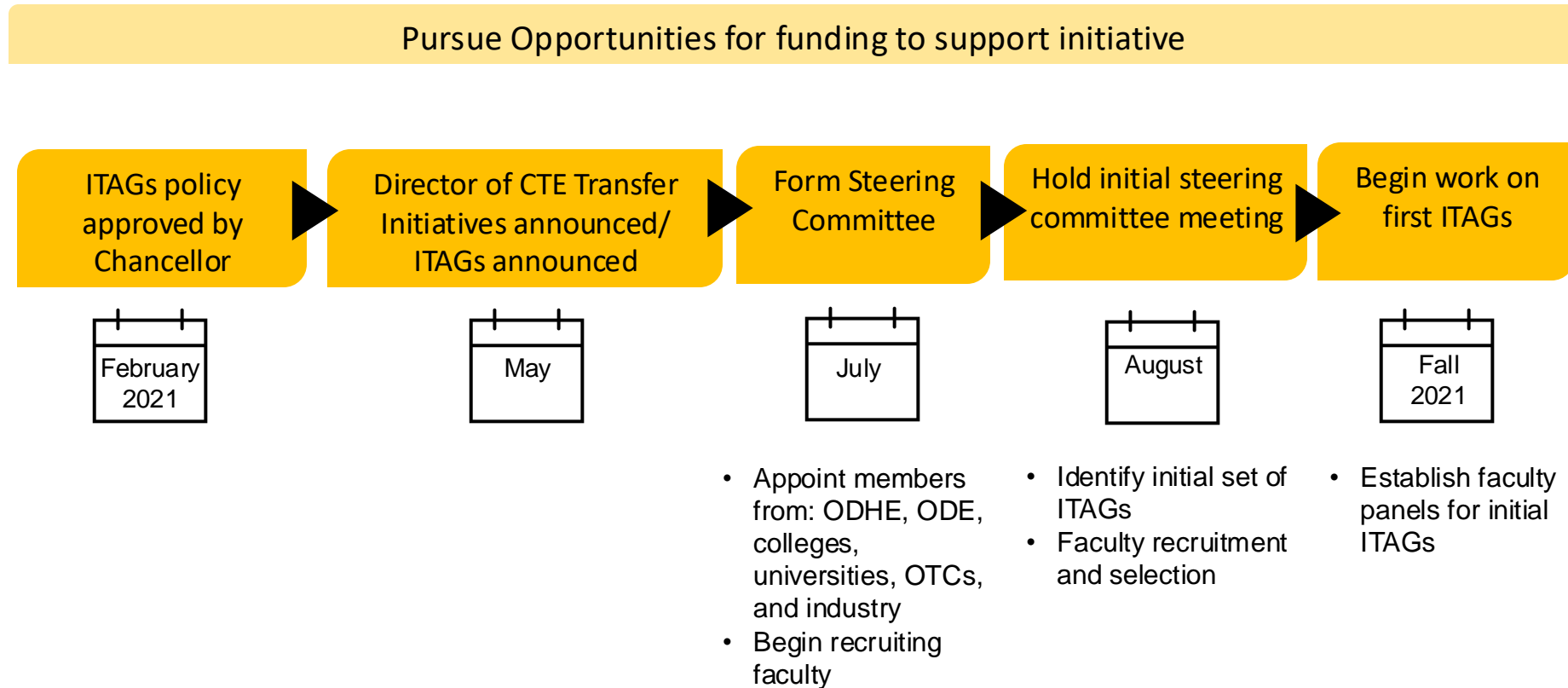




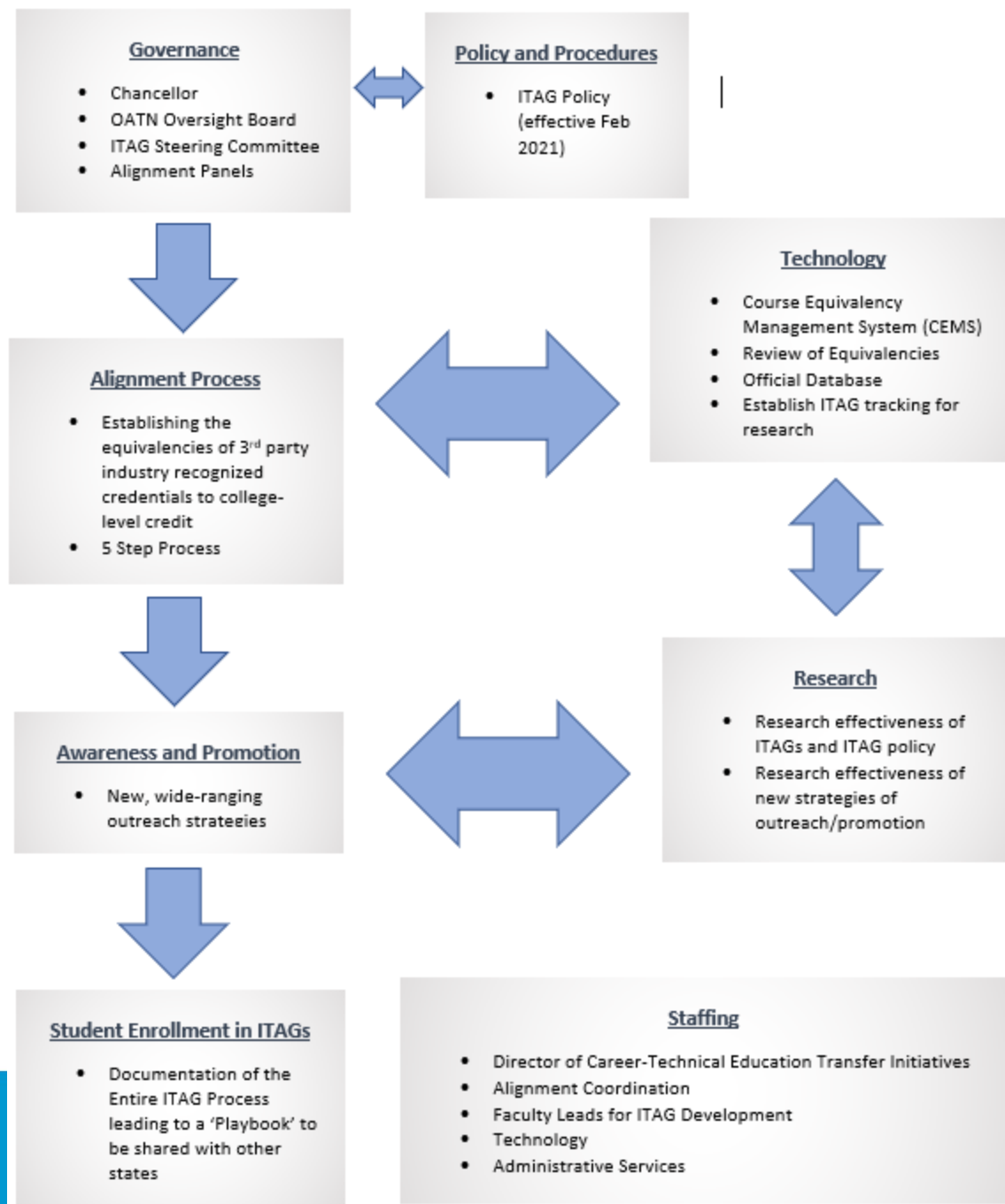
# Today's discussion will focus on the newest initiative, statewide credit for industry credentials

- ITAGs: A statewide transfer initiative that guarantees the award of college level credit to students earning agreed upon industry-recognized credentials.
- Credit is awarded:
  - Regardless of where the credential is earned
  - For specified courses deemed equivalent by faculty
- Aims of the initiative:
  - Recognize that learning can be validated by an industry-recognized credential
  - Reduce variability in transfer credit evaluation and application
  - Provide students and employers a more unified college credit and credentialing system that recognizes learning outside of the classroom

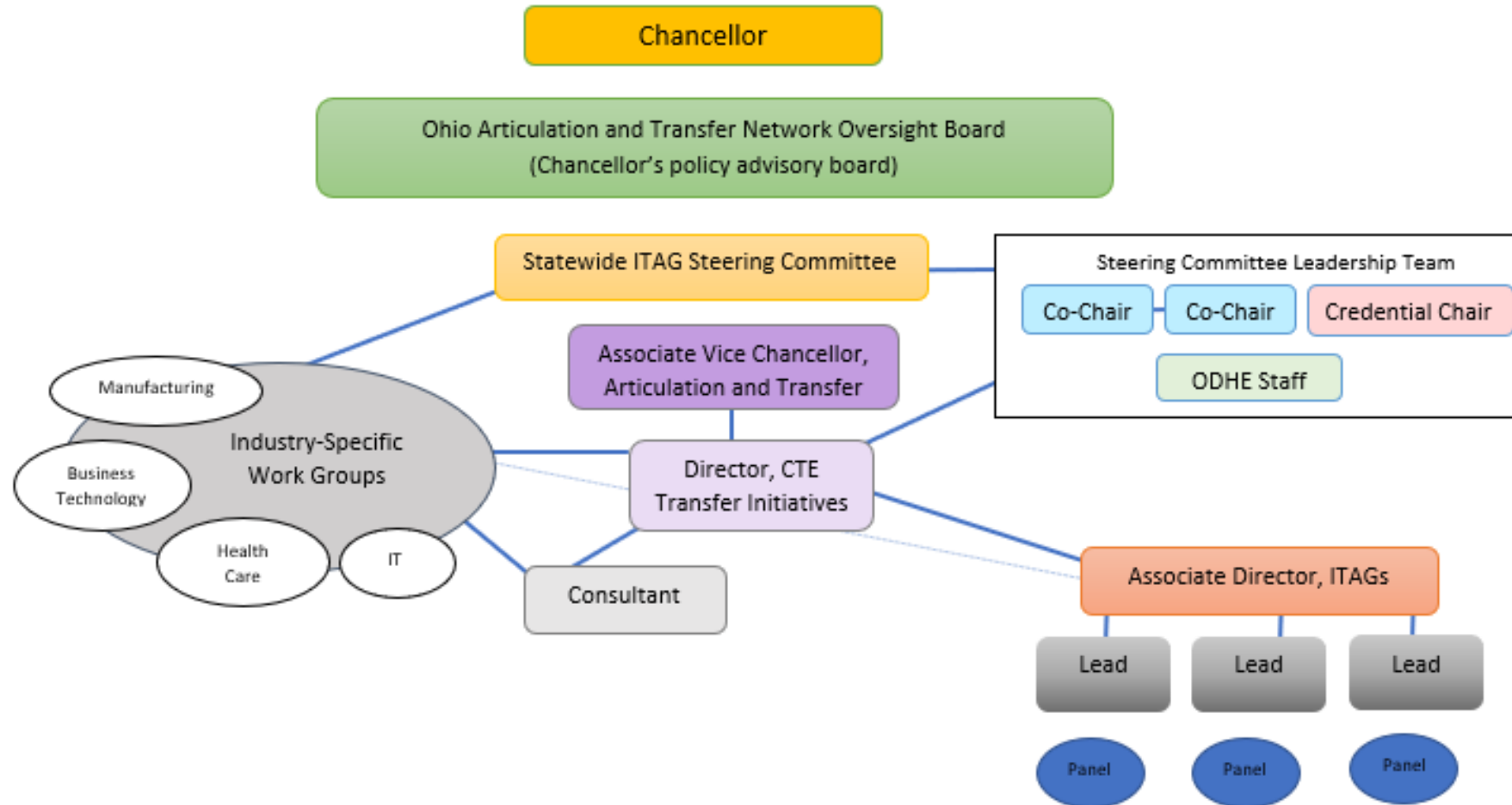
# ODHE began its efforts to establish ITAGs in 2021



# ODHE identified many components to designing and implementing ITAGs



# ODHE identified groups and individuals to lead the work



# ODHE has approved more than 30 ITAGs across different fields

<b>Engineering &amp; Manufacturing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmable Logic Controllers*</li> <li>• Hydraulics and Pneumatics*</li> <li>• Computer Aided Design*</li> <li>• Shielded Metal Arc Welding</li> <li>• Gas Tungsten Arc Welding</li> <li>• Gas Metal Arc Welding</li> <li>• Industrial Robotics</li> </ul>
<b>Business Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft PowerPoint Associate</li> <li>• Microsoft Excel Associate</li> <li>• Microsoft Word Associate</li> <li>• Microsoft Access Expert</li> </ul>
<b>Healthcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed Practical Nurse</li> <li>• Paramedic-to-RN</li> </ul>

<b>Information Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cisco Certified Technician</li> <li>• Cisco Certified Network Associate</li> <li>• CompTIA Network+</li> <li>• CompTIA Security+</li> <li>• EC-Council Certified Ethical Hacker</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAA Private Pilot Airplane License</li> <li>• ASE Automobile &amp; Light Truck Certification</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Development Associate</li> <li>• ServSafe Manager</li> <li>• sUAS Safety Certification Level 1</li> </ul>

\*More than one credential has been approved in these areas. ODHE approved 3 Programmable Logic Controllers certificates, 3 Hydraulics and Pneumatics certificates, and 4 Computer Aided Design certificates.

# ODHE will continue its efforts to scale ITAGs

- Ensure alignment of ITAG with the state's broader initiatives around workforce development
- Continue to engage in direct collaboration with industry partners
- Build student awareness of and interest in educational Opportunities

# ODHE partnered with RAND to build evidence around the initiative

<b>Aims</b>	To support effective implementation and scaling of ITAGs and CTAGs within Ohio; to build evidence to inform policy and practice in other states
<b>Funders</b>	Lumina Foundation, National Science Foundation
<b>Timeline and key activities</b>	<p><i>Supporting design and launch (2021-2023):</i> Conduct a literature review, data analysis, and interviews with key state, institutional, and industry stakeholders to support equity-focused implementation and help to build an evidence-based outreach plan.</p> <p><i>Supporting and assessing implementation (2023-2026):</i> Conduct surveys and interviews of learners and collect data from the state and institutions to inform and track outreach approaches, improve college intake processes, and better understand the experiences of the individuals targeted by these initiatives to inform improved take-up and success</p>

# RAND and ODHE have identified six lessons from the work so far

- 1) Use an inclusive and faculty-driven process.
- 2) Choose credentials where individuals can benefit most from the opportunity.
- 3) Use many messengers to let individuals know that their industry credentials can get them college credit.
- 4) Use simple messages and communication tools to get the word out.
- 5) Make intake processes at community colleges and universities as streamlined and systematic as possible.
- 6) Track data to assess and improve the initiative.



# Lesson 1: Use an inclusive and faculty-driven process

## Why it is important

- Ohio is a decentralized higher education system, so awareness and buy-in among leadership and staff at individual institutions is important.
- Industry credentials are overseen by independent third-party providers, so coordination with these partners is necessary.

## What Ohio did

- Long-standing structure of faculty panels driving articulation agreement design
- Intentional involvement of industry partners throughout the process
- Partnership with RAND to gather evidence on learner, institutional, and industry perspectives

# Lesson 2: Choose credentials where individuals can benefit most from the opportunity

## Why it is important

- Statewide credit for learning agreements take time, so it is important to prioritize those with the most value added, e.g.,
  - Industry credential aligned with a college certificate or degree program
  - College credential is in-demand and leads to good job
  - Industry credentials held by historically underserved groups

## What Ohio did

- Intentional, data-driven process of prioritizing credentials (e.g., race/ethnicity of industry credential-holders, college credential aligned with in-demand job)
- Partnership with RAND to build evidence on individuals who might benefit from ITAGs

# Lesson 3: Use many messengers to get the word out about the opportunities

## Why it is important

- Take-up of credit for prior learning has historically been low
- Credit for prior learning outreach is typically targeted to those already enrolling, limits opportunities to increase enrollment
- Industry credential-holders are spread across the community and get education and training info from a wide range of sources

## What Ohio did

- Partnership with RAND to build broad outreach plan and evidence on different outreach approaches
- Investment in a range of different outreach efforts, e.g., website, info sessions for various stakeholders, social media, newspaper marketing, pathways maps for institutions

# Lesson 4: Use simple messages and communication tools

## Why it is important

- Credit for prior learning is complex, and individuals don't necessarily need to understand all of the details
- Communication around opportunities may be more effective if tied to topics that motivate enrollment, like job opportunities, or saving time and money on college

## What Ohio did

- Partnership with RAND to build evidence on the best approaches to messaging
- Incorporated simple messaging into various outreach efforts, e.g., website, info sessions, media and marketing, pathways maps

# Lesson 5: Ensure intake processes at colleges are streamlined and systematic

## Why it is important

- Colleges are the main players in providing outreach to prospective and current enrollees about credit for prior learning and establishing the process to recognize that credit.
- Evidence suggests that processes can often be complex and opaque for students, and that colleges can do more to streamline them

## What Ohio did

- ODHE provided information and training to institutional leaders and staff on ITAG policies and verification processes
- RAND is working with Ohio institutions to identify and share out promising approaches to intake

# Lesson 6: Track data to assess and improve the initiative

## Why it is important

- Tracking information on implementation and outcomes can help to improve the way initiatives are delivered
- Policies and processes require time and resources, and it's important to understand the return on investment

## What Ohio did

- Trainings for institutions on how to code new credit opportunities in the Higher Education Information systems
- Ongoing internal review of data to assess take-up
- Partnership with RAND to build evidence to inform the implementation of the initiative

## Now we'd like to hear from you

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- Are you rolling out similar initiatives in your state?
- What successes and challenges have you faced?
- Do these lessons learned ring true? Do you have others?

# Some key takeaways around Ohio's efforts to award credit for industry credentials

- Springboard for attracting “some college no degree” students
- Can provide the bridge between career technical programs and college degree or certificate programs
- Need to closely align to program/career pathways (i.e., lead to somewhere)
- Provides opportunity to link faculty and industry
- Future step: Collaborative design of industry recognized credentials for emerging industries



# Thank you!

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Ohio ITAGs Website



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