



Lessons Learned from the Noncredit Mobility Academy: How to Improve Your State's Noncredit Data

SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference

August 13, 2025 | 10:00 - 10:45am CST

Postsecondary institutions are feeling the pressure of delivering value

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES DESERVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE VALUE OF COLLEGE

The cost vs. value paradox: what Americans really think about college

Courtney Brown • March 19, 2025

OPINION: College is worth it for most students, but its benefits are not equitable

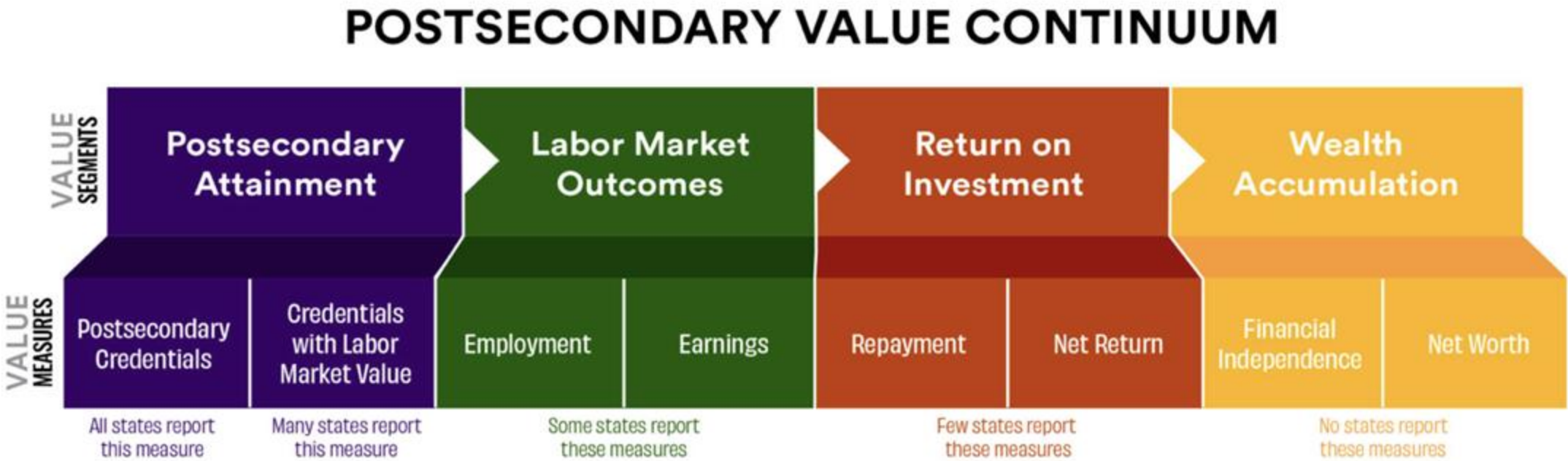
New research shows the value of higher education, despite troubling polls

LEADERSHIP > EDUCATION

Making The Great Value Shift Is The Key To Higher Education’s Future

By [Matt Gandal](#), Contributor. © Matt Gandal examines how education can...

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The Great Value Shift



Interest in short-term credentials is on the rise among learners



+13.6%

Growth in enrollments at public 2-year institutions with workforce focus

Undergraduate certificate program enrollment grew for the fourth consecutive year

+9.9%



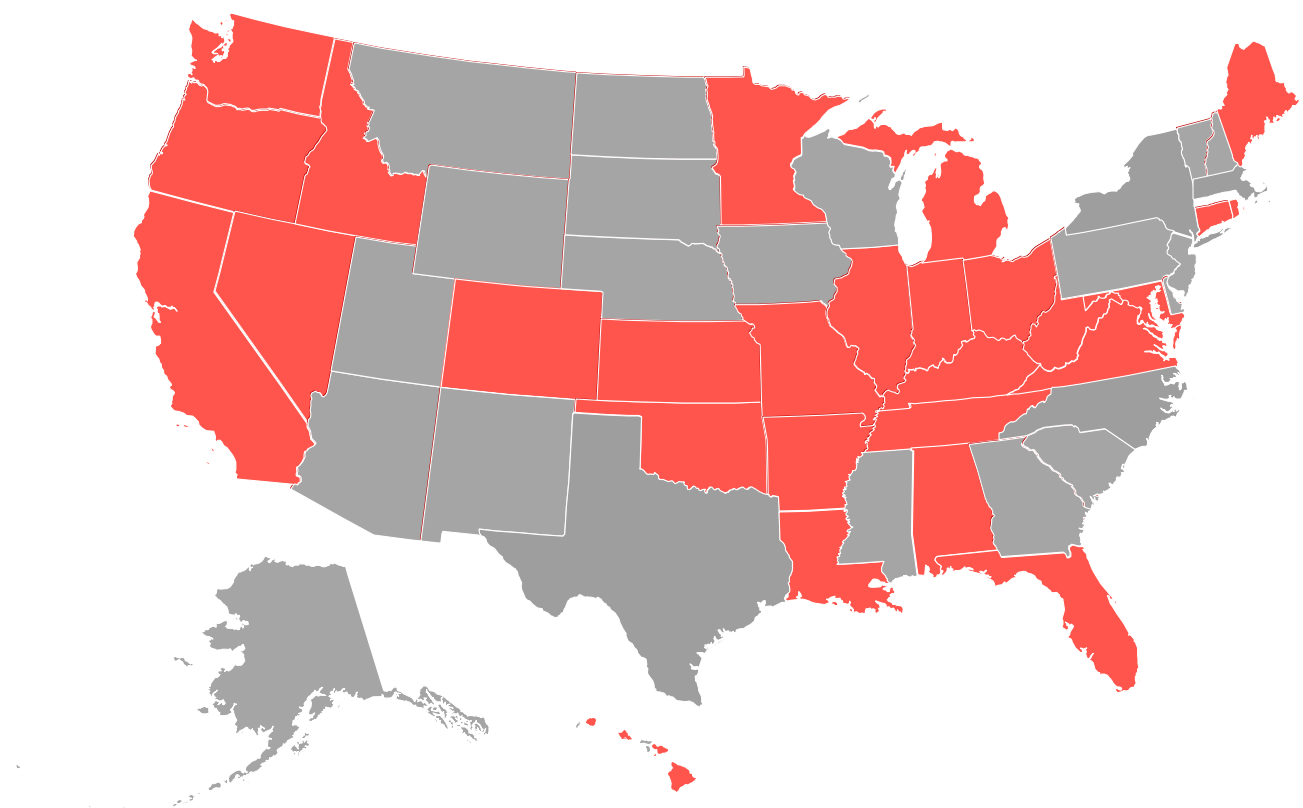
4.1M

learners enrolled in noncredit

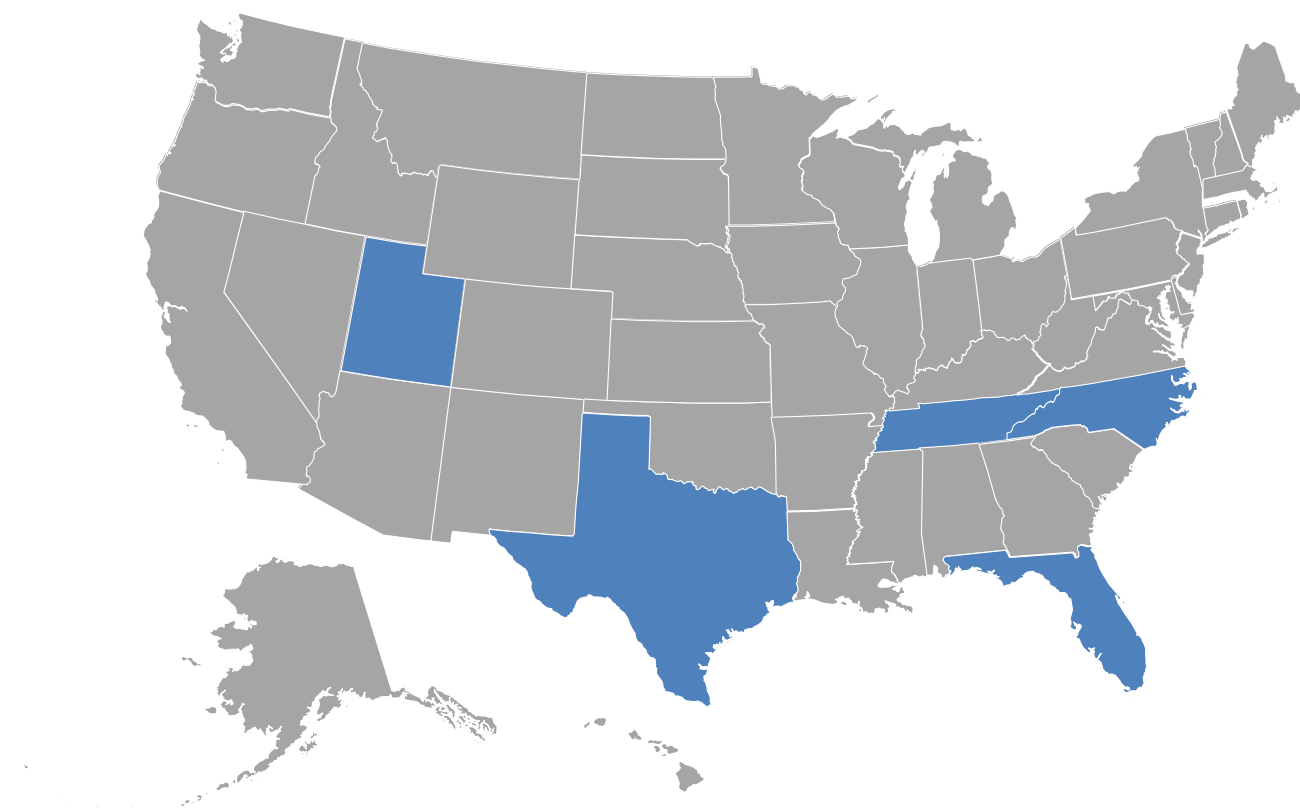


Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2025); American Association of Community Colleges (2024)

And policymakers continue to invest in short-term training...



35+ direct-to-student aid programs



Five states with outcomes-based funding for short-term training

\$5.6B
Total

Source: HCM Strategists (2024)

Workforce Pell is also now a reality



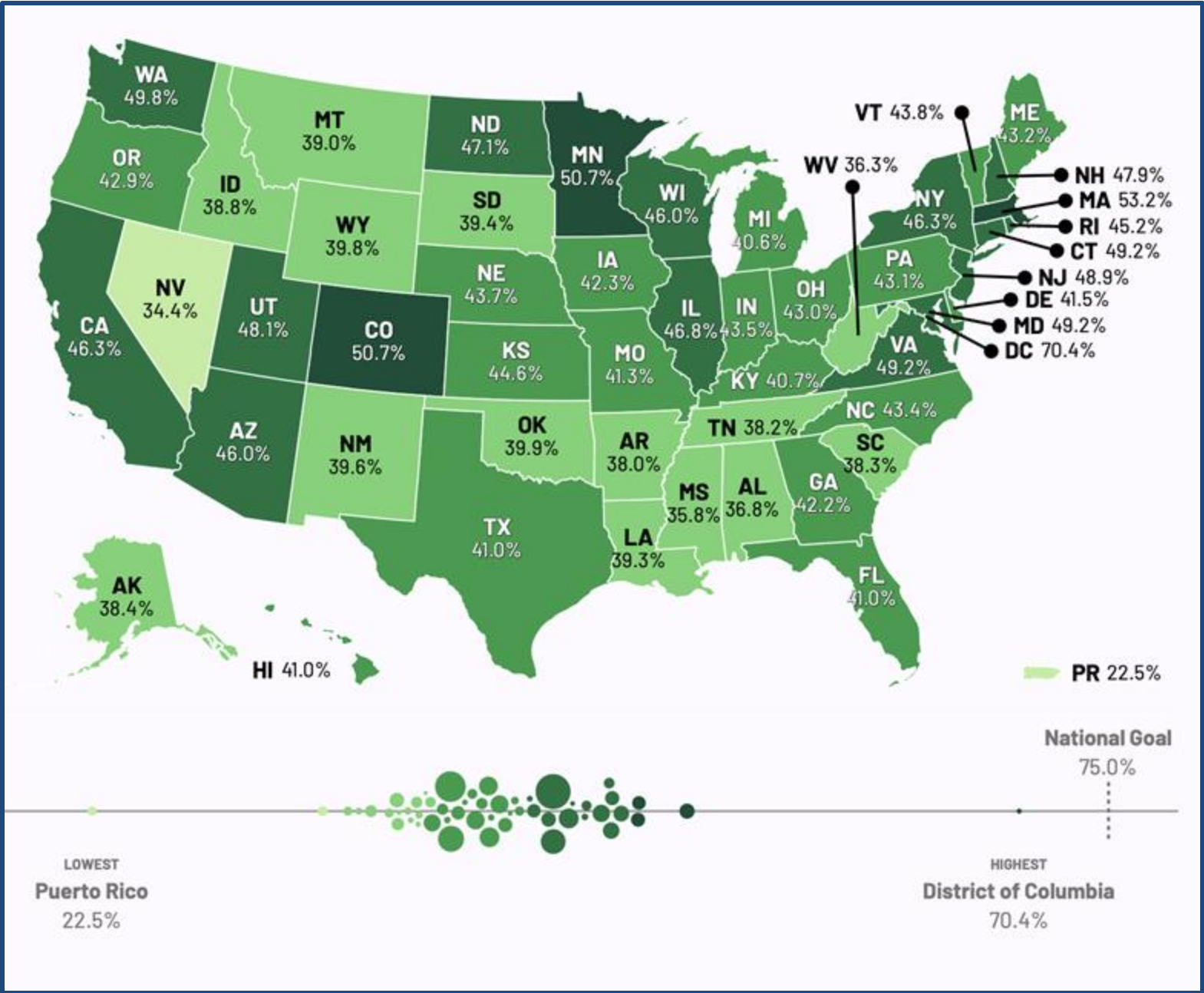
- Must be between **150 and 599 clock hours** and between **8 and 15 weeks**,
- **Prepare learners for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand sectors or occupations** determined by the governor or state workforce board in each state,
- **Meet the hiring requirements** of more than one employer
- **Lead to an industry-recognized credential that is stackable and portable**,
- **Provides credit** that articulates to one or more additional certificates or degree programs,
- **Has been offered by the institution for at least one year prior to receiving eligibility** on a rolling basis,
- **Have a verified completion rate of at least 70%**, within the 150% of normal time for completion,
- **Have a verified job placement rate of 70%**, measured at 180 days of program completion, and
- **Meet an earnings requirement** that relies on program cost, median earnings, and the federal poverty level.

Source: JFF (2025)

Short-term credentials, often noncredit, are an important part of a state's value and attainment strategy

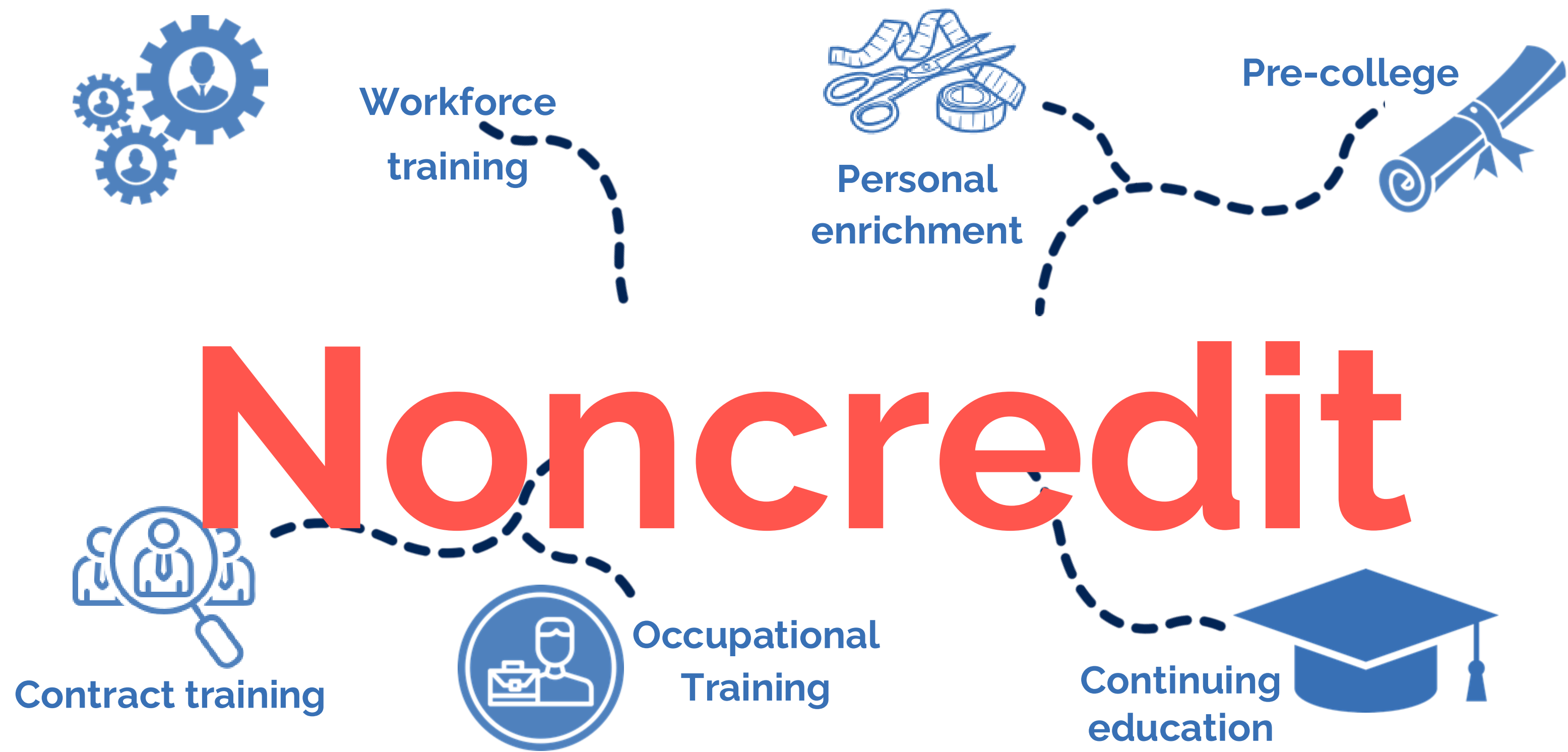


There is a lot for us to figure out first...



Source: Lumina (2025) Stronger Nation

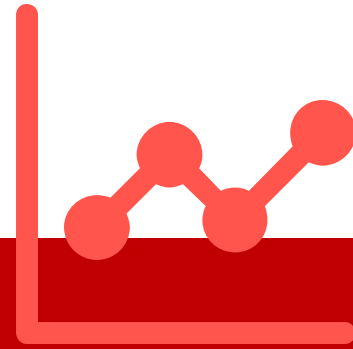
Such as data definitions, collection, and reporting procedures



Sound data and policy infrastructure are needed



There is not a singular understanding of what “noncredit” is



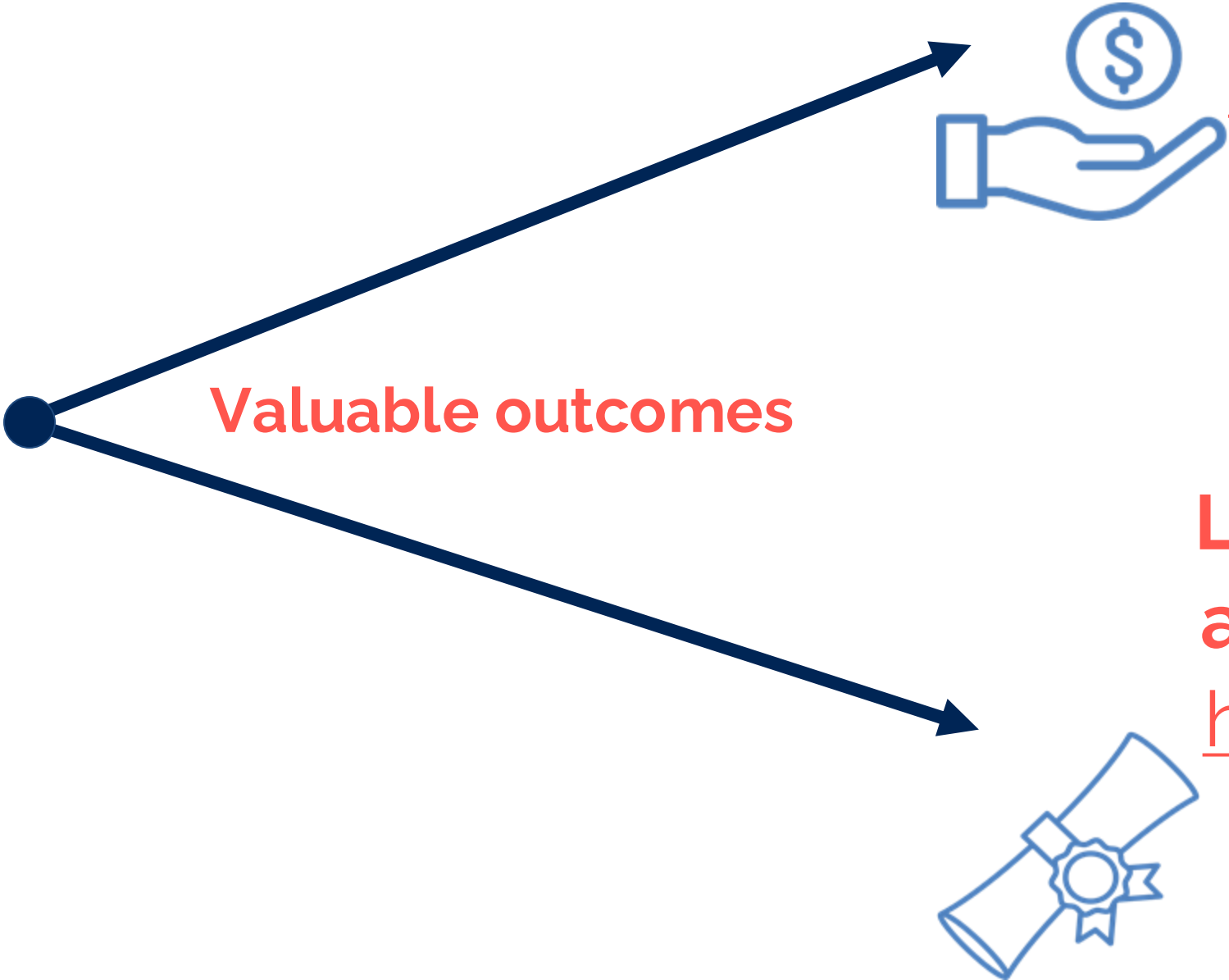
Data on noncredit offerings are insufficient to drive policy change



Funding for noncredit is often disparate and provisional

Our core objective is outcomes-focused

 **OUR GOAL:**
Learners have **clear, easily identifiable pathways** from noncredit training leading to



A good job with family-sustaining wages, benefits, and upward promotion opportunities

Longer-term education and training ending in a high-quality, high-value credential or degree

We accomplished this in a number of ways, including:



Establish journeys from **short-term credential to graduate level** to ensure credit mobility and equitable opportunities.



Produce clear pathways, maps, or course sequences that will be publicly available to inform learners and their families of the range of postsecondary options.



Establish standards for internal articulation within institutions between **credit and noncredit courses and programs** to clearly outline career pathway options for students.



Come to a shared agreement on the purpose and **value of noncredit** offerings in Montana.



To achieve and incentivize the completion of **noncredit credentials** for learners.



Conduct a landscape analysis of current noncredit activity at **both two- and four-year institutions** to develop a statewide system.



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Thank you!
Questions?