Lumina FOUNDATION

# The REACH Collaborative: Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Ed

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ESG Education Strategy Group

OCCRL Office of Community College Research and Leadership

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# Land and Labor Acknowledgement

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# Collaborative Goal

Two percent increase in credential attainment for enrolled Black, Hispanic, and Native American ages 25-64 at participating community colleges by 2023

Sequence pathways to degrees

Credential attainment includes both non-degree credentials and associates degrees

Support state efforts to reach their equity goals

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# Data (www.reachcollab.org)

**6.7x**

**greater average net worth of a white family than that of a Black family**

*Source: **Brookings***

**48%**

**fewer Black workers in professional occupations than white workers**

*Source: **Economic Policy Institute***

**18%**

**lower attainment of associate degrees for Native American and Hispanic adults than white adults**

*Source: **Lumina Foundation***

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## California: 25 Community Colleges

California's focus on promoting equity, supporting adult learners, and adopting guided pathways are in direct symmetry with the REACH Collaborative. Twenty community colleges that are involved in a complementary Guided Pathways implementation project are poised to integrate REACH strategies into this work. California's REACH collaborative, a community of practice launched by the Success Center for California Community Colleges, will help colleges implement pathways-based reforms and supports specifically aimed at adult students of color.

## Colorado: 13 Community Colleges

Colorado has set clear strategic goals that center adult students of color, such as increasing their credential attainment in STEM and education fields. Colorado's State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) recently launched a $5 million program focused on closing racial equity gaps by targeting classroom practices over the next three years. Community College of Aurora's success in closing equity gaps using data, faculty coaches, and professional development to foster inclusive, culturally relevant, and high-quality teaching and instruction serves as a model for all 13 of the state's community colleges participating in the REACH Collaborative. Colorado's robust statewide credit for prior learning policy also positions these colleges well for serving adult learners.

## New York: 30 Community Colleges

New York's experience with translating noncredit to credit programs is beneficial to the state's REACH Collaborative work. In addition to participating in Credential As You Go (CAYG), an incremental credentialing initiative supported by a Lumina Foundation grant, the State University of New York (SUNY) administers apprenticeship and workforce development programs that incorporate credit and noncredit pathways to associates degrees. More than half of New York's community colleges, 30 of which are taking part in REACH, are adopting guided pathways with the support of coaches. A commitment to statewide implementation of culturally responsive curriculum will also align with REACH's focus on culturally sustaining practices.

## North Carolina: 24 Community Colleges

North Carolina's efforts to engage and support adult learners and match program offerings with workforce needs will be valuable to its REACH Collaborative work. Through the NC Workforce Credentials initiative, the state uses a research-based process to identify high-value, non-degree credentials that includes validating them with industry leaders. North Carolina's Better Skills Better Jobs program, which aims to recruit more adult students into pathways and connect them with local employers, could also be an asset for the 24 REACH colleges. Racial equity training provided to guided pathways coaches through the NC Student Success Center will be useful in designing pathways for adult students of color.

## Texas: 50 Community Colleges

Widespread adoption of guided pathways has occurred across Texas' 50 community college districts as a result of Texas Pathways. This statewide strategy that supports building pathways to high-value credentials will serve as a firm foundation for the state's REACH Collaborative work. The Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE), which aims to expand certificate and micro-credential programs leading to high-demand job fields, particularly for displaced workers, will also be leveraged. Texas community colleges who participated in a recent basic needs assessment with the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice can use those insights to help inform and guide the creation of bundled supports for adult students of color at REACH colleges.

## Virginia: 23 Community Colleges

Virginia's current efforts with noncredit to credit programs and bundled supports align well with aspects of the REACH Collaborative framework. The FastForward program provides short-term training for in-demand industries, allowing for noncredit credentials to be translated into academic credit. The Get Skilled, Get a Job, Get Ahead (G3) initiative, a tuition-free community college program for low- and middle-income students who pursue jobs in high-demand fields, provides wraparound financial assistance to help eligible students. Virginia's participation in the Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) initiative, supported by Lumina Foundation, provides access to research, funding, and

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# Essential Elements (Pillars)

## Credential Pathways

Identify a **cohort** of states and institutions.

Scale the **curricular alignment** model across non-degree and credit with emphasis on quality and **equity** criteria.

Provide **technical assistance** to inform system redesign efforts.

## Bundling and Sequencing Supports

Support **state systems** to better bundle and deliver student supports (academic, financial, and holistic) as part of **pathway redesign** models.

Enlist **local partners** to advise and provide technical assistance to support this integration and center equity.

## Culturally Sustaining

Identify partners to help weave in **culturally sustaining approaches** within bundled student success strategies and redesigned pathways.

Emphasis on **dismantling approaches** that contribute to disparate/stratified outcomes.

Two percent increase in credential attainment for enrolled Black, Hispanic, and Native American ages 25-64 at participating community colleges by 2023

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# About OCCRL

*Strengthening Pathways for All Students Through Research and Leadership*

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# Research & Development

pathwaysTOresults

REVERSE TRANSFER

HISPANIC-SERVING COMMUNITY COLLEGES
STEM PIPELINES

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

EQUITY CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PATHWAYS

CTE APPRENTICESHIPS

MSCC
Minority Serving Community Colleges

Transitioning Learners to Calculus in Community Colleges

Postsecondary Pathways for Former Foster Care Youth

Advancing Racial Justice & Equitable Outcomes in Community Colleges Institutes

Program Review *Illinois*

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Lorenzo Baber

Gianina Baker

H. M. Kuneyl

**UIUC-OCCRL**
**University of Pittsburgh**
**REACH Project Team**

Raina Dyer-Barr

Eboni Zamani-Gallaher

Jason Keist

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# REACH Asset-Mapping

## Design

- Purpose: Reflection, Baseline, Prioritizing for Coaching/TA
- Seven Domains, each with multiple Elements
- Scale
  - Asset
  - Leverageable
  - Minimal
  - Unknown
- Evidence
- Map at the Grantee level and then the College level

## Domains

- Policy & Funding
- Program Delivery
- Bundle/Sequence Supports for Pathways
- Data & Reporting
- Leadership & Governance
- Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement
- Equity

# REACH Asset-Mapping

## Deliverables

- 1 REACH Collaborative analysis memo
  - High-level takeaways from each domain
    - Strengths
    - Opportunities
    - Areas of Interest
- 6 state-level analysis memos
  - Identifies 2 priority areas for each state
    - State and IHE agreement & disagreement
    - State and Collaborative agreement & disagreement

## Interactive Dashboard

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# REACH Asset-Mapping

## Strengths

*Bundle/Sequence Supports for Pathways*

- The Institution intentionally routes students to **basic needs** support to address childcare, housing, and food insecurity.
- The Institution intentionally routes adult students to **career advising**.
- The Institution ensures that **emergency aid** is easily accessible and consistently awarded to students in need.

*Data & Reporting*

- The Institution collects Social Security numbers and/or Unique **Student IDs in both credit and noncredit** enrollments and that is used to track longitudinal outcomes.
- Race, gender, and wage **outcomes** are collected for credit programs.

*Equity*

- The Institution has outlined **targeted equity goals** for specific racial groups in postsecondary outcomes.
- The Institution has publicly announced an explicit **focus on improving racial equity gaps** in postsecondary outcomes.

*Leadership & Governance*

- The Institution has the **capacity** (staff and resources) and expertise to support building and implementing REACH.
- The Institution has a **record of reform initiatives** targeting adult learners and learners of color, and a demonstrated ability to manage change.

*Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement*

- The Institution regularly **engages with employers** to create employer-validated program curricula and increased graduate transitions to the workforce.
- The Institution collaborates with workforce systems to **use labor market data** to identify high-value credentials and programs.

*Policy & Funding*

- The Institution's **priorities** are directly aligned with REACH, and there's an indication the Institution will prioritize REACH work.
- The Institution has a **list of high-wage, high-demand credentials** that are based on criteria.

*Program Delivery*

- The Institution has **identified barriers** to completion for adult students.
- The Institution intentionally uses a mix of active learning **instructional delivery methods** to meet adult students' needs for most courses.

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# REACH Asset-Mapping

## Opportunities

*Bundle/Sequence Supports for Pathways*

- The Institution assigns adult-specific (25+) **navigators** to ensure adult students are supported in a proactive manner along their pathway.

*Data & Reporting*

- **Completer wage information** is collected quarterly for 1 year after completion for noncredit enrollments.
- **Noncredit postsecondary outcomes** are publicly reported through an interactive dashboard where people can easily filter and select information.

*Program Delivery*

- The Institution's **message and marketing materials and curriculum materials** (course content and pathway content) are primarily tailored to adult-aged (25+) students.
- The Institution systematically **incentivizes** (Debt forgiveness, priority registration, grant or scholarships) continued enrollment from non-credit, non-degree credentials to Associates.

# REACH Asset-Mapping

## Areas of Interest

*Equity*

- The Institution has launched at least one **racial equity initiative** which has led to a significant (5% or more) decrease in racial attainment gaps.

*Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement*

- The Institution regularly **engages with employers** to create employer-validated program curricula and increased graduate transitions to the workforce.
- The Institution **collaborates with workforce systems** to use labor market data to identify high-value credentials and programs.

*Policy & Funding*

- The Institution's priorities are directly **aligned with REACH**, and there's an indication the Institution will prioritize REACH work.
- **Federal stimulus funds** are dedicated to financially support the following: credentials of value, adult (25+) learners (direct aid), racial equity efforts, bundled supports, non-credit to credit alignment, and data/reporting.

*Program Delivery*

- The Institution has identified **barriers to completion** for adult students.
- The Institution intentionally uses a mix of active learning **instructional delivery methods** to meet adult students' needs for most courses.

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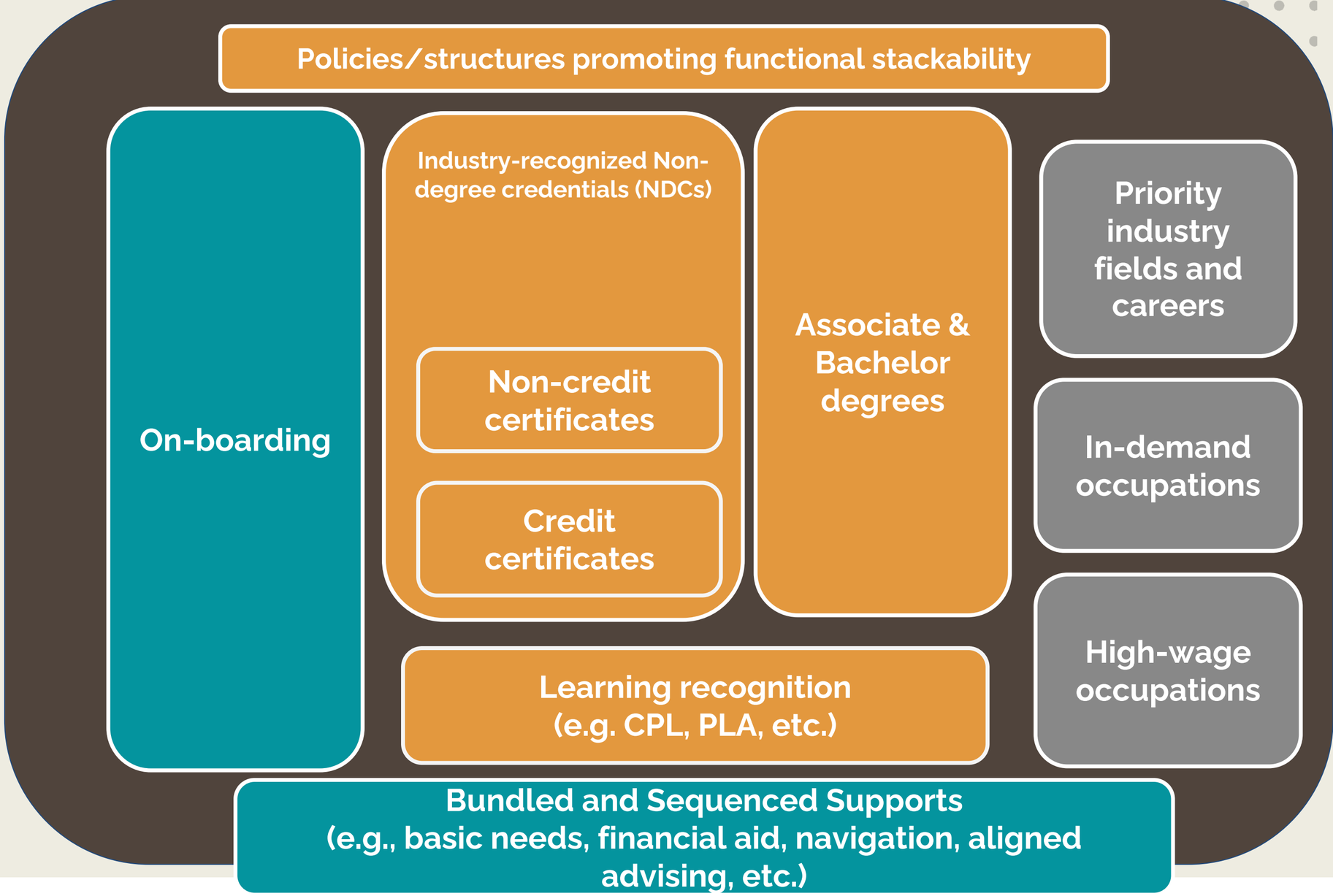
collaborative

# Our REACH Universe

Culturally Sustaining Practices (CUSP)

Bundling and Sequencing Supports

Credential to Degrees Alignment

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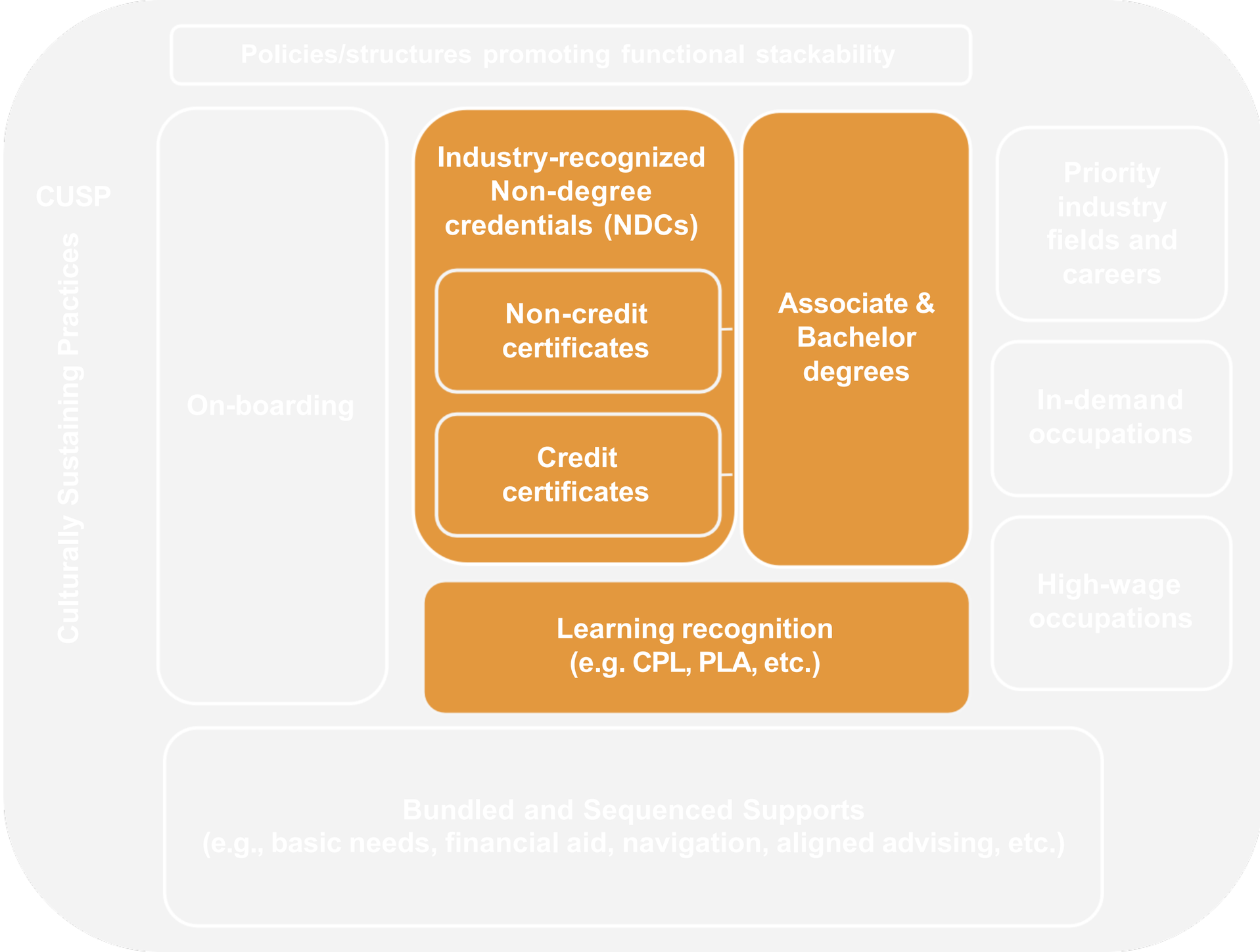


# Making the Case for Alignment

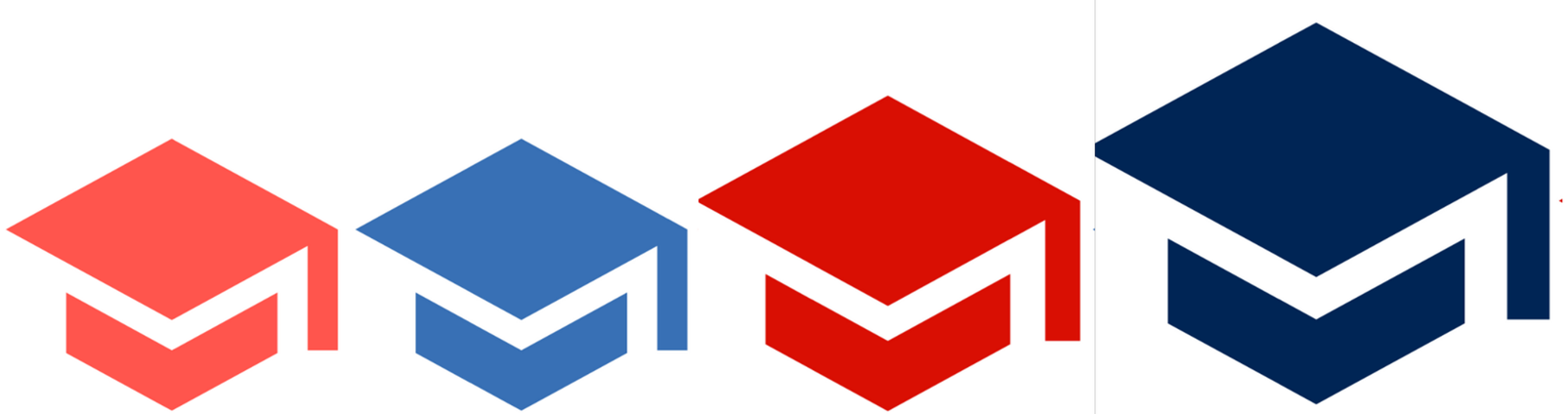
**Our REACH Universe**

Culturally Sustaining Practices (CUSP)

Bundling and Sequencing Supports

**Credential to Degrees Alignment**

- Reducing susceptibility to economic disruption and displacement
  - Educational attainment inversely correlates to unemployment for among adults over 25 *(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020)*
- Credentials can serve as a path to economic mobility, when connected to labor market demand
- Earning potential is further magnified when students earn associate and bachelors degrees



# Credentials to Degrees Alignment

## Identify

**GOAL:**
Narrow current program offerings to 4-8 pathways for REACH

**TIMELINE:**
February 2022

## Design

**GOAL:**
Sequence pathways, consider how credentials align and stack, and the role of learning recognition

**TIMELINE:**
March - August 2022

## Implement

**GOAL:**
Execute aligned pathways for current and new students

**TIMELINE:**
September 2022

Identify

Design

Implement

**GOAL:**

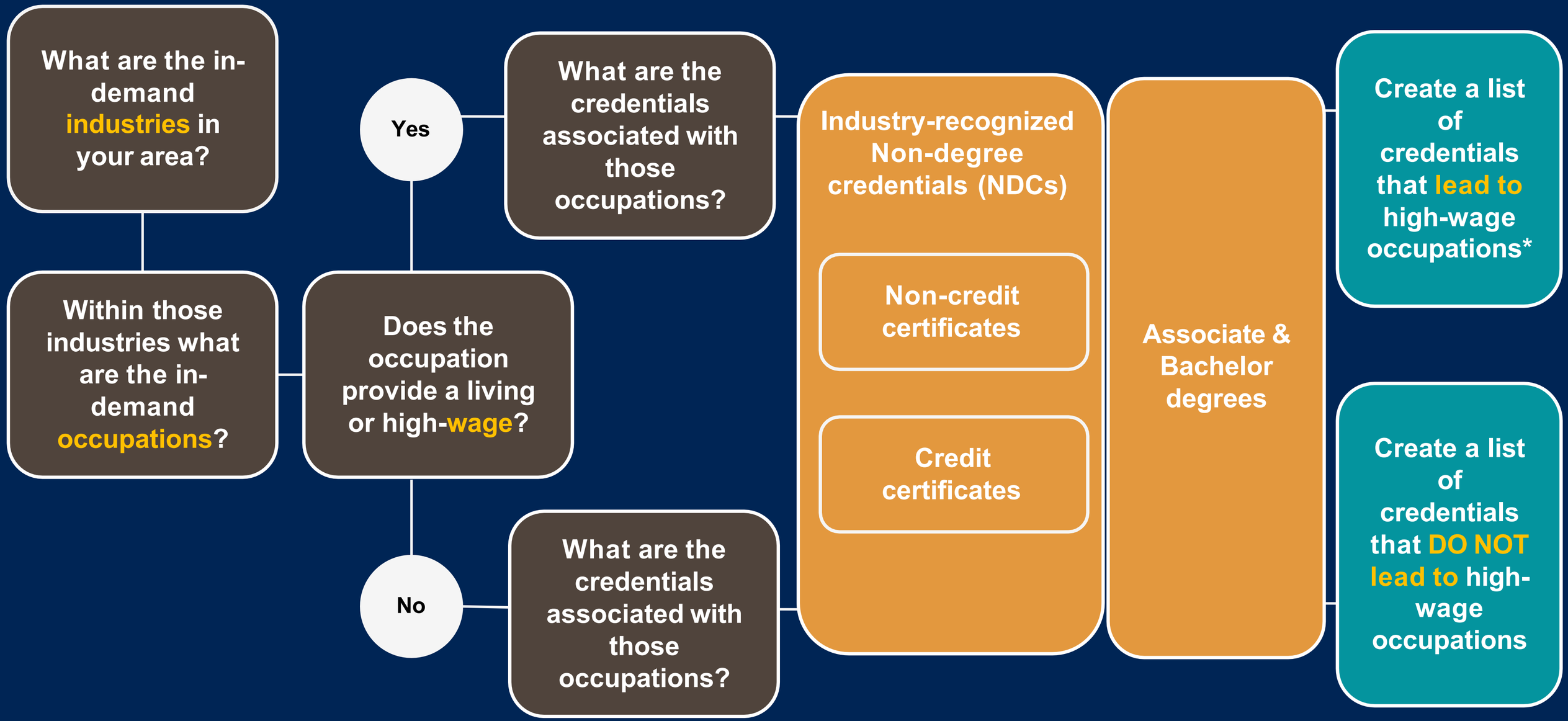
Narrow current program offerings to 4-8 pathways for REACH

**TIMELINE:**

February 2022

**How do you identify the 4-8 pathways?**

# Create a list of credentials to consider




*Consider using crosswalk from occupation SOC to CIP

**What are the in-demand industries in your area?**

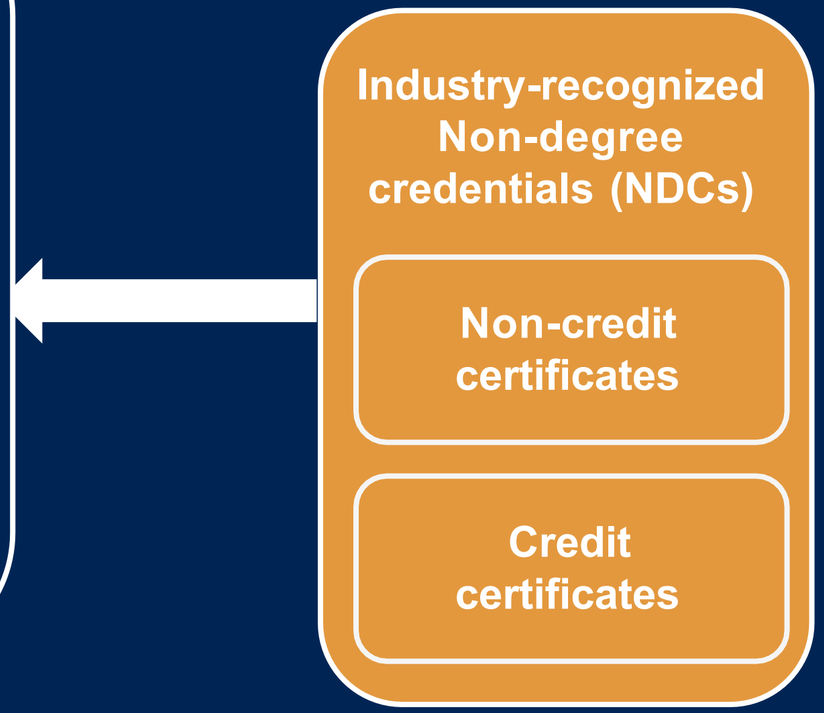
In-demand: Occupations display high rates of projected growth, have a high frequency of job postings, have a high concentration of jobs in the local region, and are aligned with emerging technology.

**Does the occupation provide a living or high-wage?**

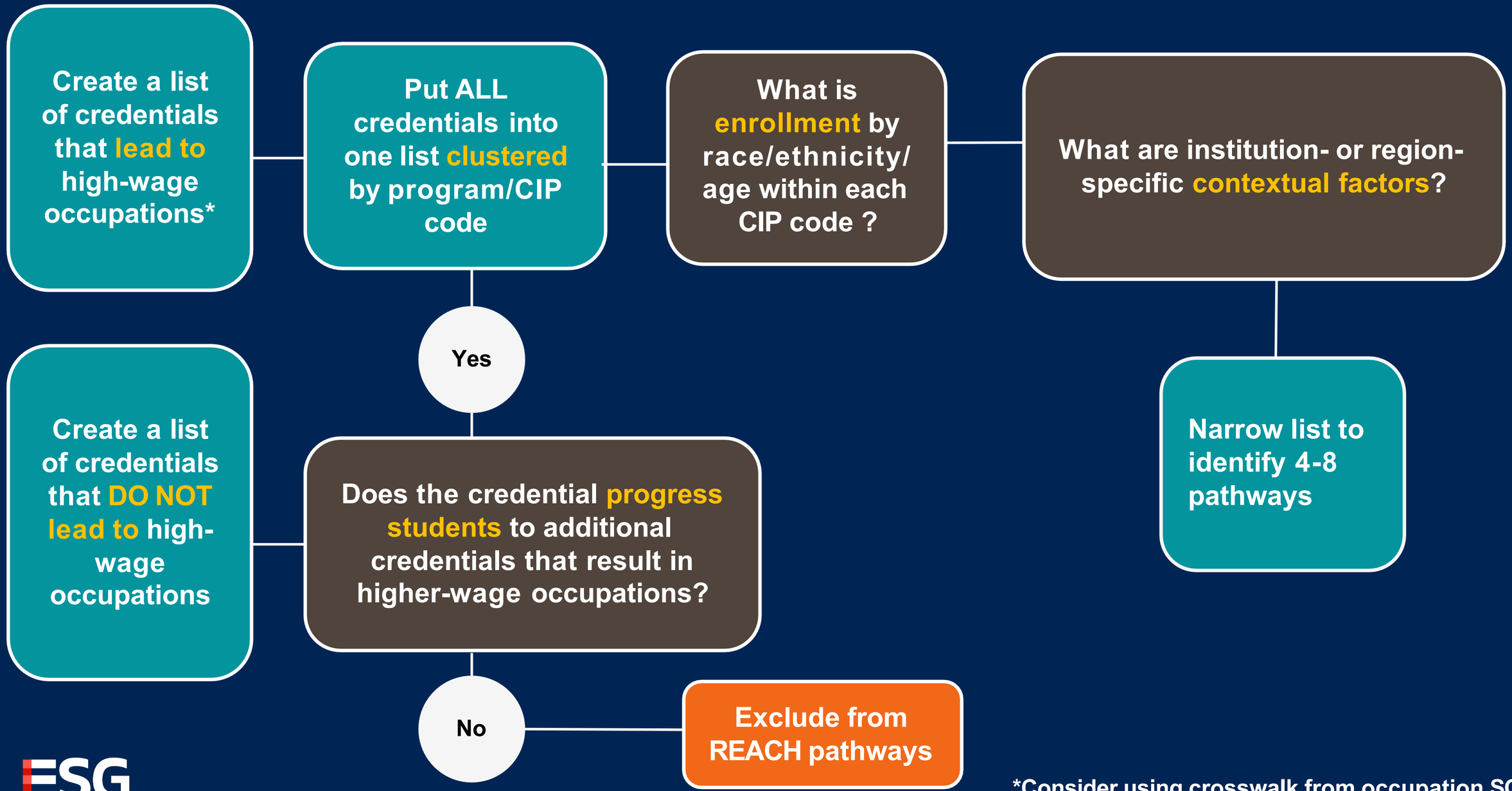
**Living-wage:** Earn a wage at which a person's basic needs (food, shelter, transportation, healthcare) can be met

**High-wage:** Earn at least 50% more than the average wage

Non-degree credential:
Body of coursework, validated by employers within the in-demand, high-wage occupations, that signal the necessary skills and expertise for hiring and can be demonstrated through an industry recognized credential or locally developed set of competencies.



# Narrow the list to identify 4-8 pathways

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**Does the credential progress students to additional credentials that result in higher-wage occupations?**

**Stackable credential programs:**
Sequential mapping of credentials that allow individuals to build their qualifications and progress on a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and likely higher-paying jobs. Each credential in the “stack”:

- Has a shorter duration than associate degree
- Has labor market value by itself, thus adding to student’s earning power
- Should be part of a structured progression that provides a clear pathway over multiple awards to completion of a degree (without losing credits from earlier credentials)

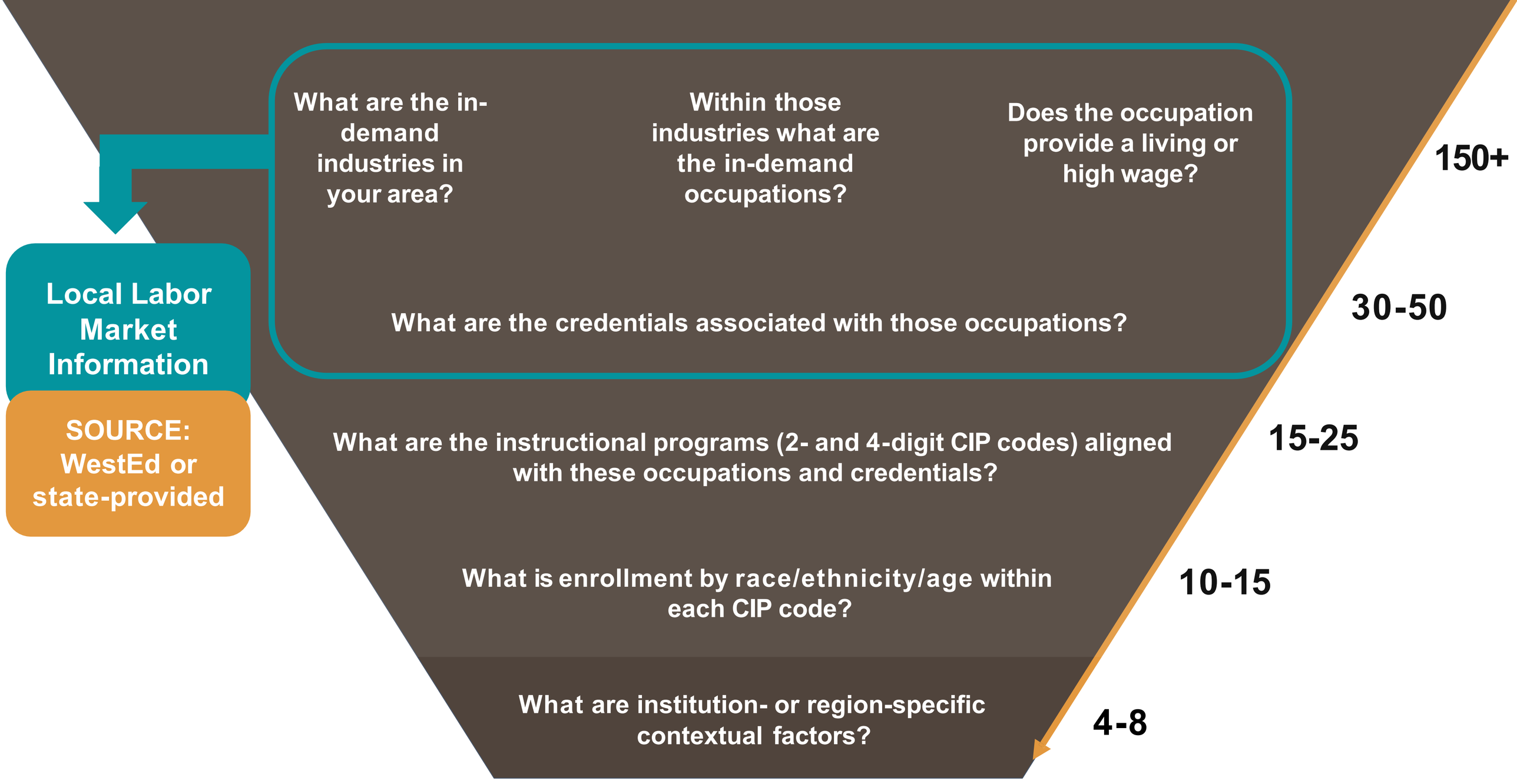
**What is enrollment by race/ethnicity/ age within each CIP code ?**

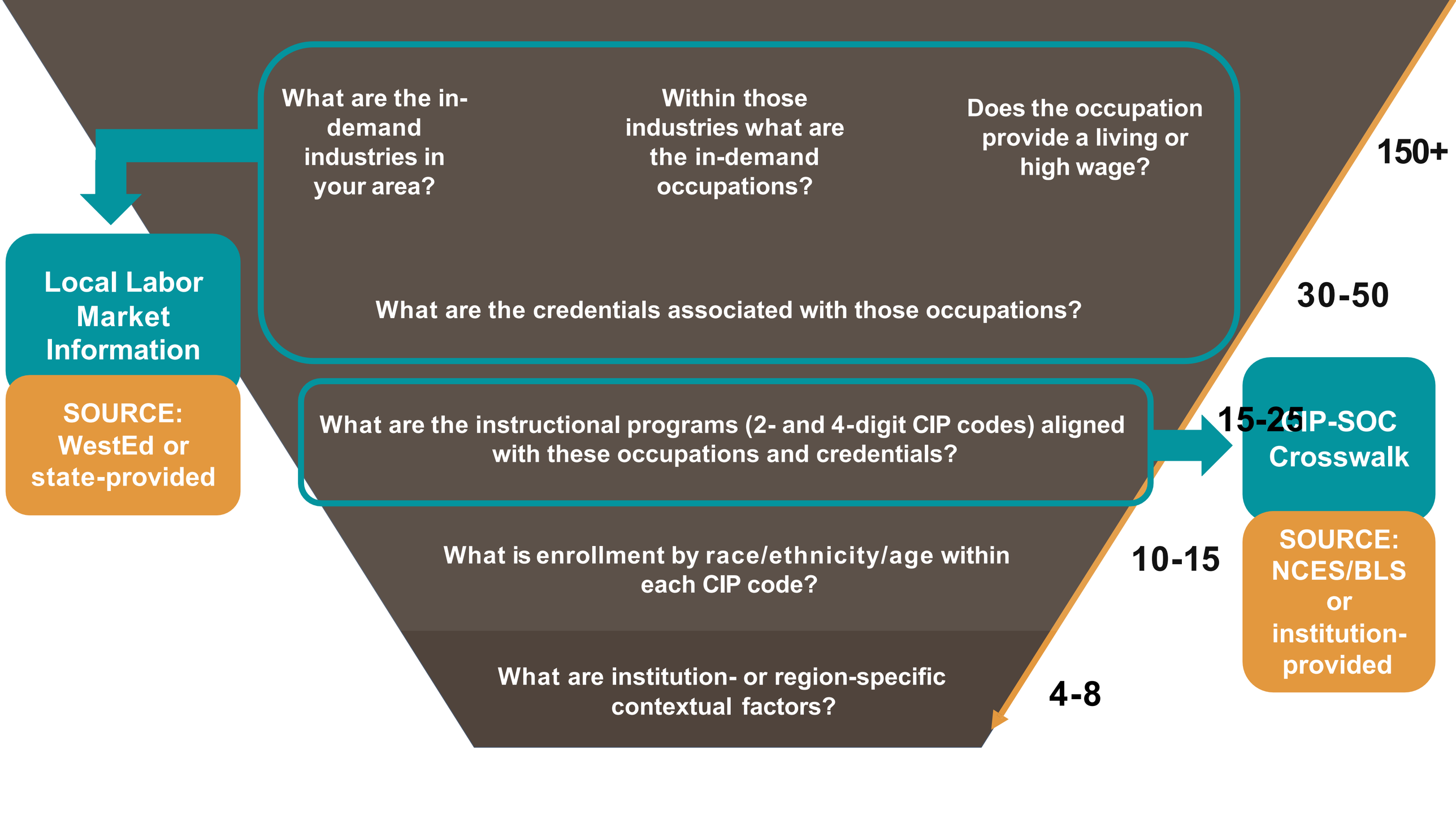
**Adult learner:** (other common terms: post-traditional, non-traditional, and adult students).

- Students age 25+ who are enrolled in credit, noncredit, and not-for-credit programs at community colleges or at adult schools.
- Age acts as a proxy to capture a large and diverse population of adult students whose life circumstances--attending part-time, working, having dependents, not having a high school diploma--can interfere with successful completion of educational objectives

*(Bean & Metzner, 1985; Cleveland-Innes, 1995; Hurtado, Kurotsuchi, & Sharp, 1996)*.

# Pathways identification funnel


What are the in-demand industries in your area?
Within those industries what are the in-demand occupations?
Does the occupation provide a living or high wage?
What are the credentials associated with those occupations?
What are the instructional programs (2- and 4-digit CIP codes) aligned with these occupations and credentials?
What is enrollment by race/ethnicity/age within each CIP code?
What are institution- or region-specific contextual factors?
150+
30-50
15-25
10-15
4-8
Local Labor Market Information
SOURCE: WestEd or state-provided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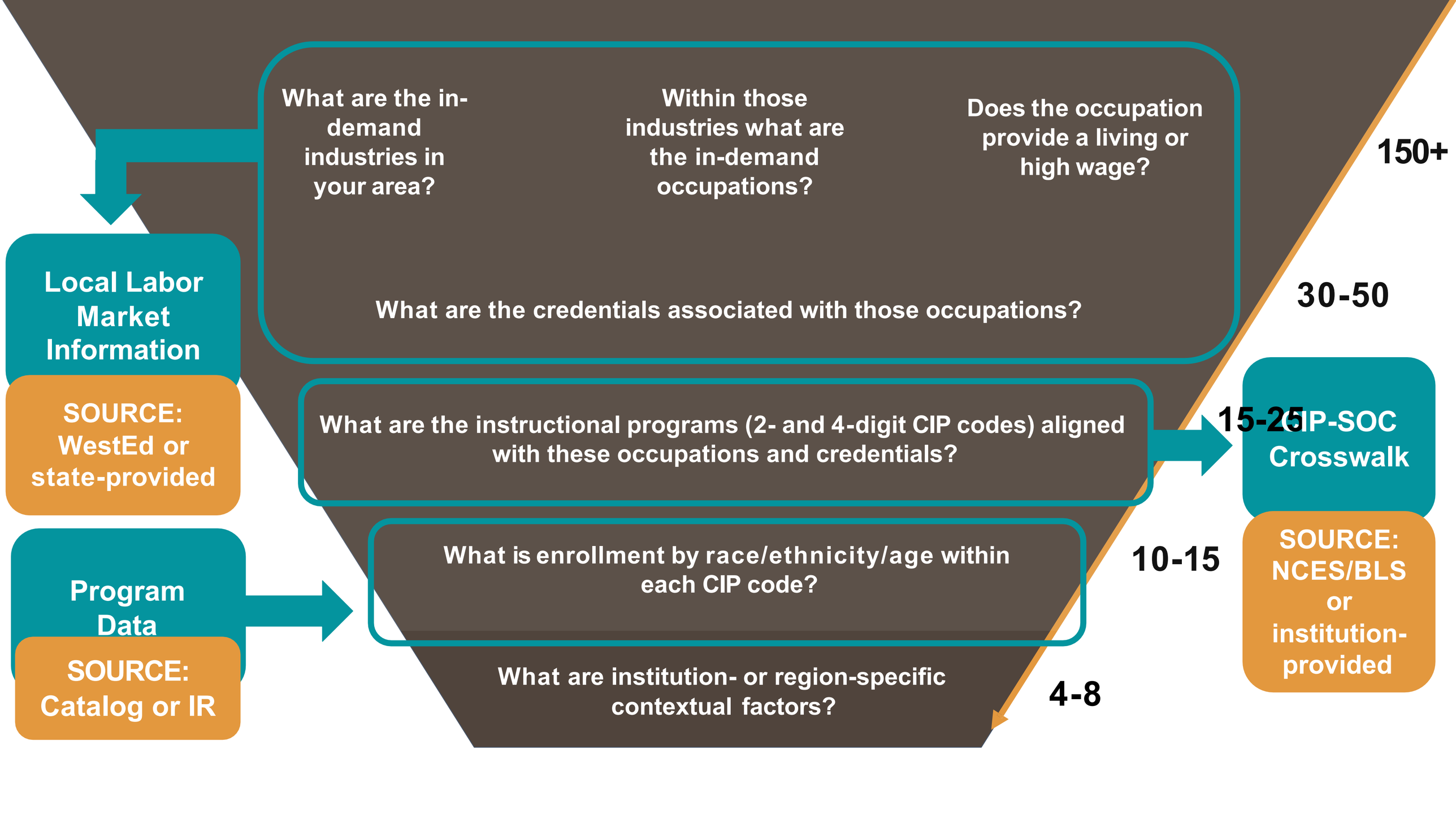
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CIP-SOC Crosswalk
Program Data
SOURCE: Catalog or IR
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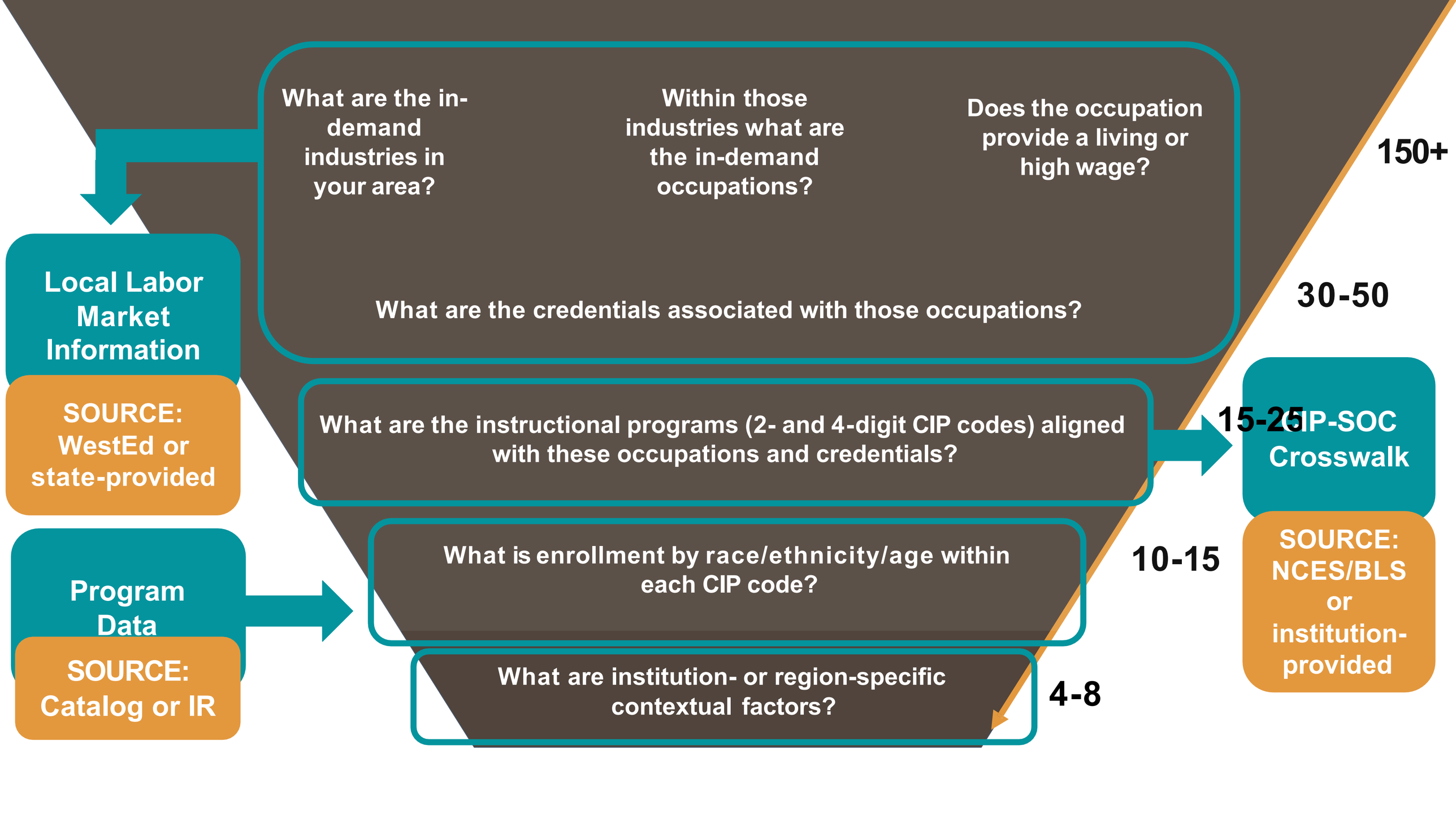
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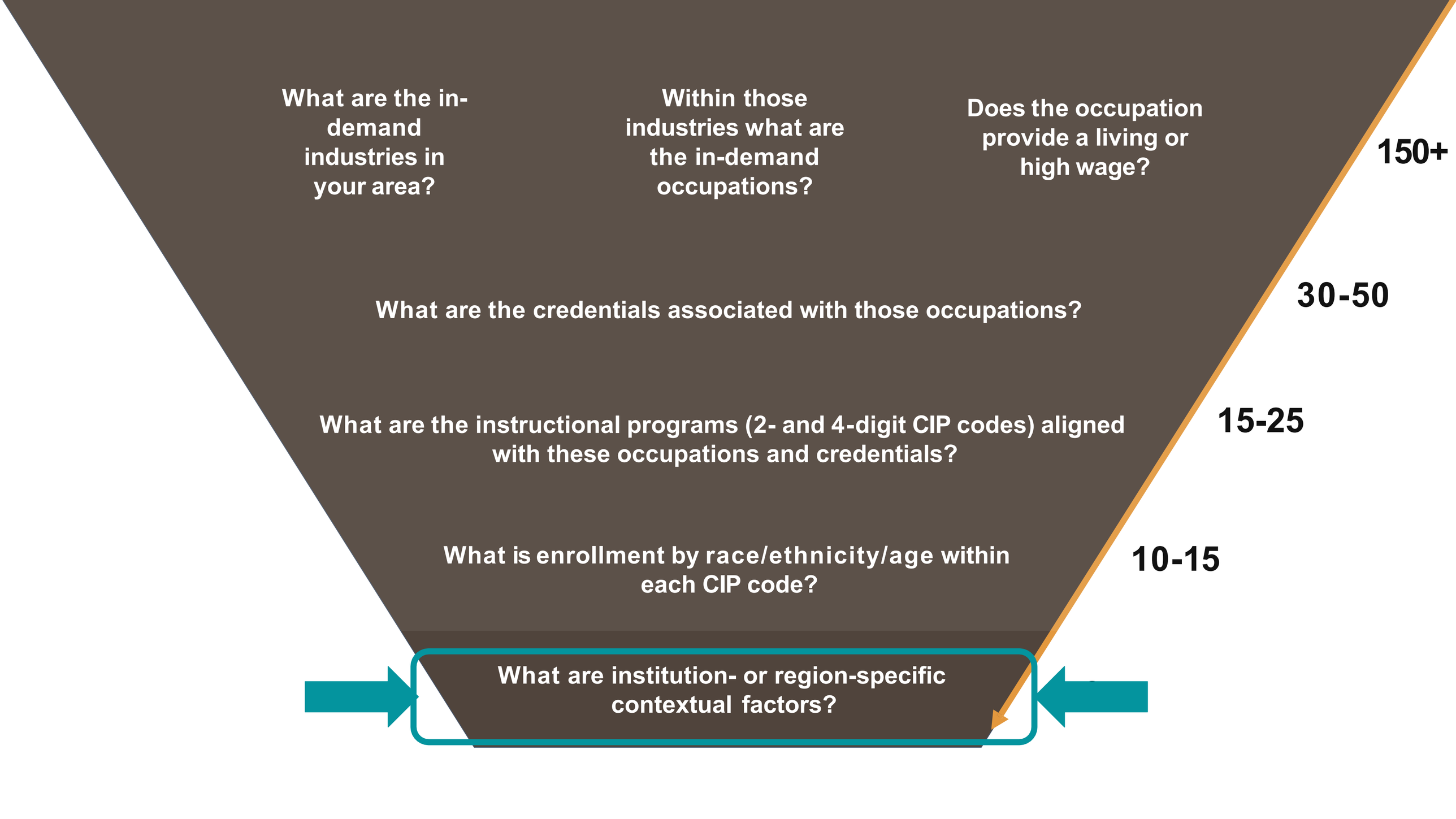
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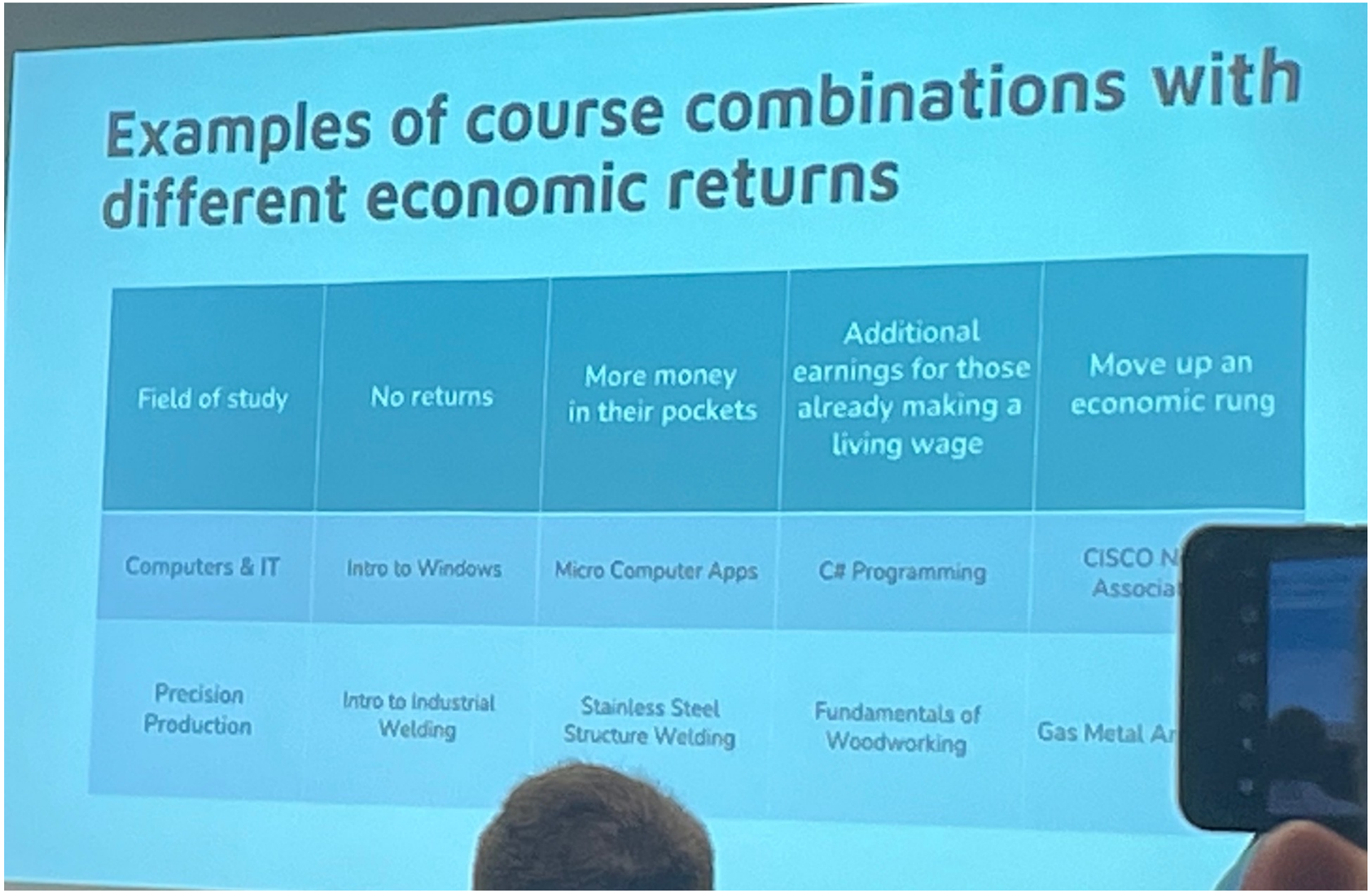



Chancellor's Summit on Adult Learners (Colorado) – WestEd Skills Builders

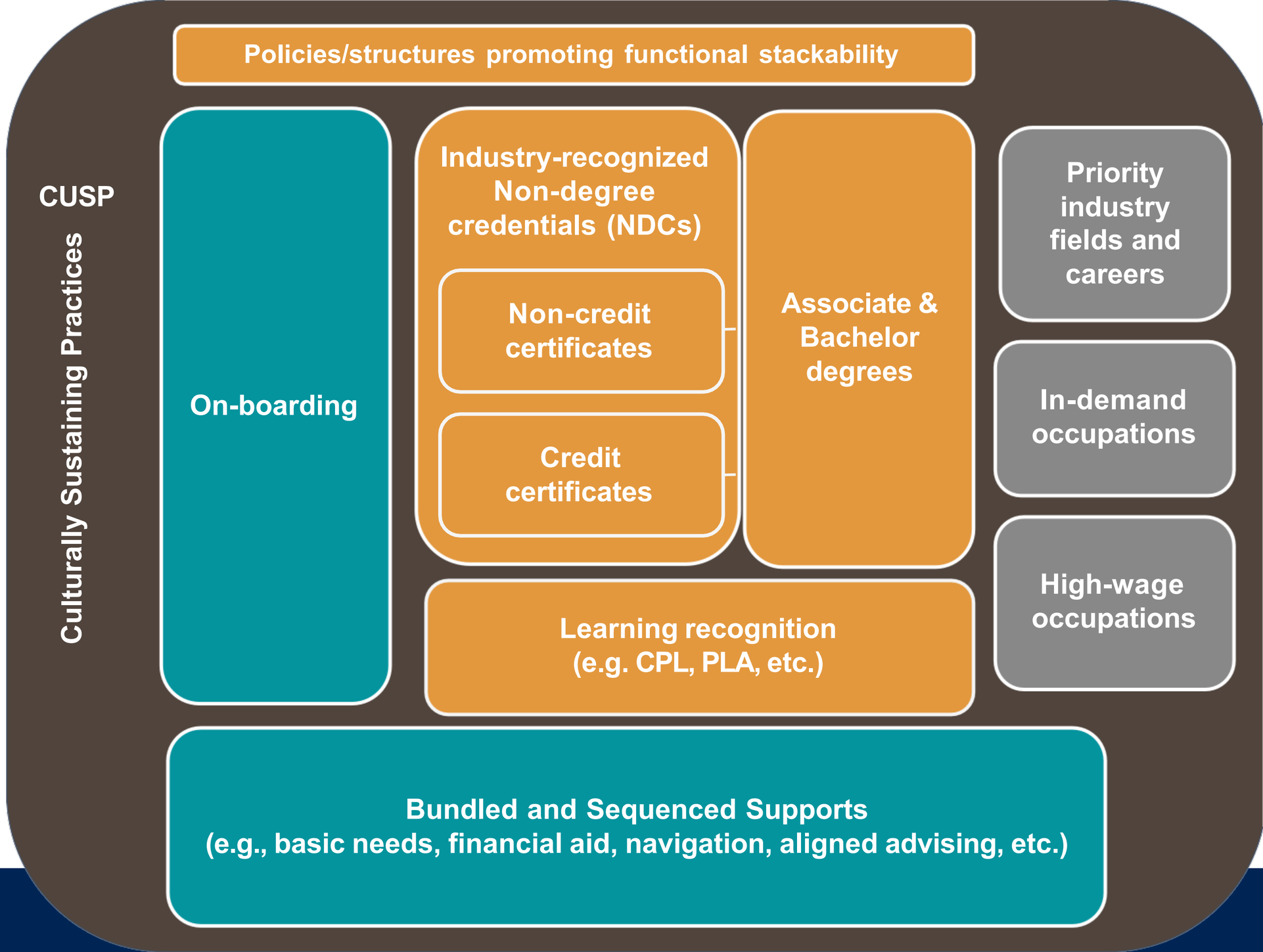
Website: bit.ly/cs-skills-builders

# Our REACH Universe

Culturally Sustaining Practices (CUSP)

Bundling and Sequencing Supports

Credential to Degrees Alignment



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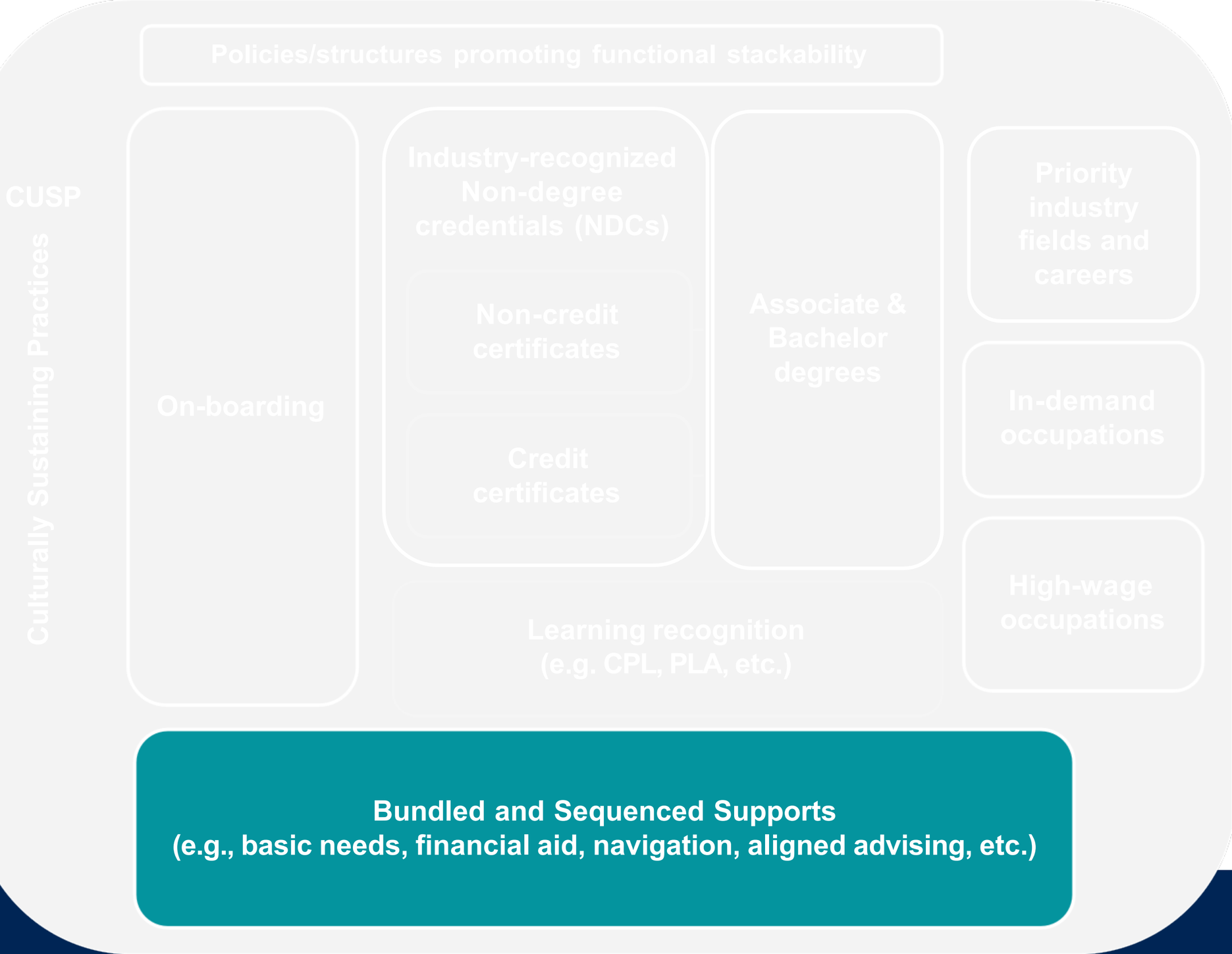
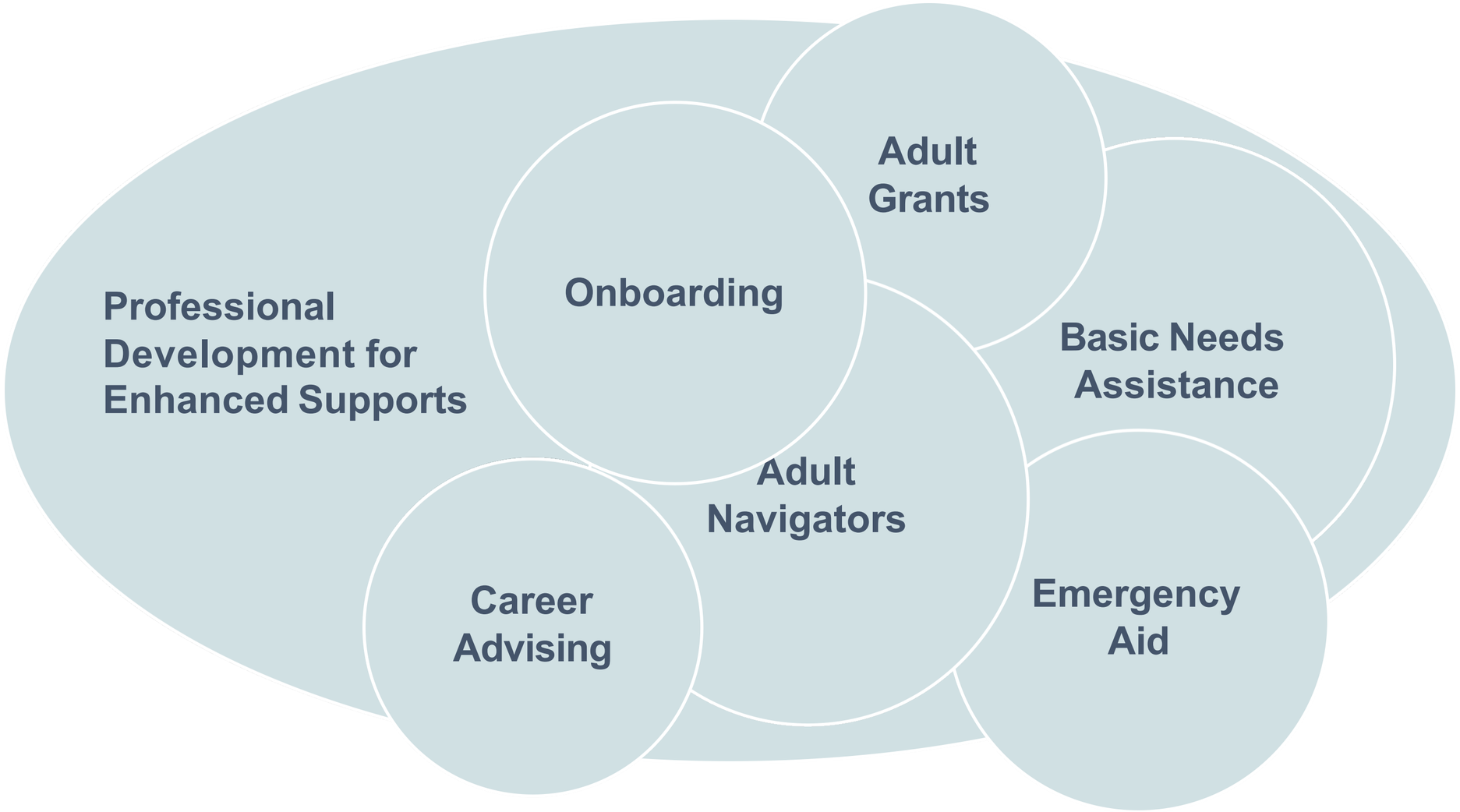


# Bundling and Sequencing Supports



ENROLL
Adult Navigators
Onboarding
Career Advising
Basic Needs Assistance
Adult Grants
Career Advising
Adult Navigators
COMPLETE
Basic Needs Assistance
Onboarding
Adult Navigators
PERSIST
Basic Needs Assistance
Emergency Aid

# Making the Case for Bundling and Sequencing

**Our REACH Universe**

Culturally Sustaining Practices (CUSP)

**Bundling and Sequencing Supports**

Credential to Degrees Alignment

Delivering the range of supports that students need to persist and succeed from enrollment to completion, when they need them

- Students juggling learning with work, caregiving, and other responsibilities
  - Non-tuition expenses account for 80% of COA at community colleges (The Real Price of College, 2016)
- Monitoring student progress to help them stay on track
  - Identify barriers (learner, institutional structures/processes)
  - Redesign delivery of supports (how, when, what)
  - Facilitate access to resources
- Available for students pursuing short-term credential, associate, and bachelor degree (A More Unified Community College, 2020)
- Adult learner credential completion can increase significantly, when receiving supports (Impacts of Key Community College Strategies on Non-Degree Credential Completion by Adult Learners, 2019)

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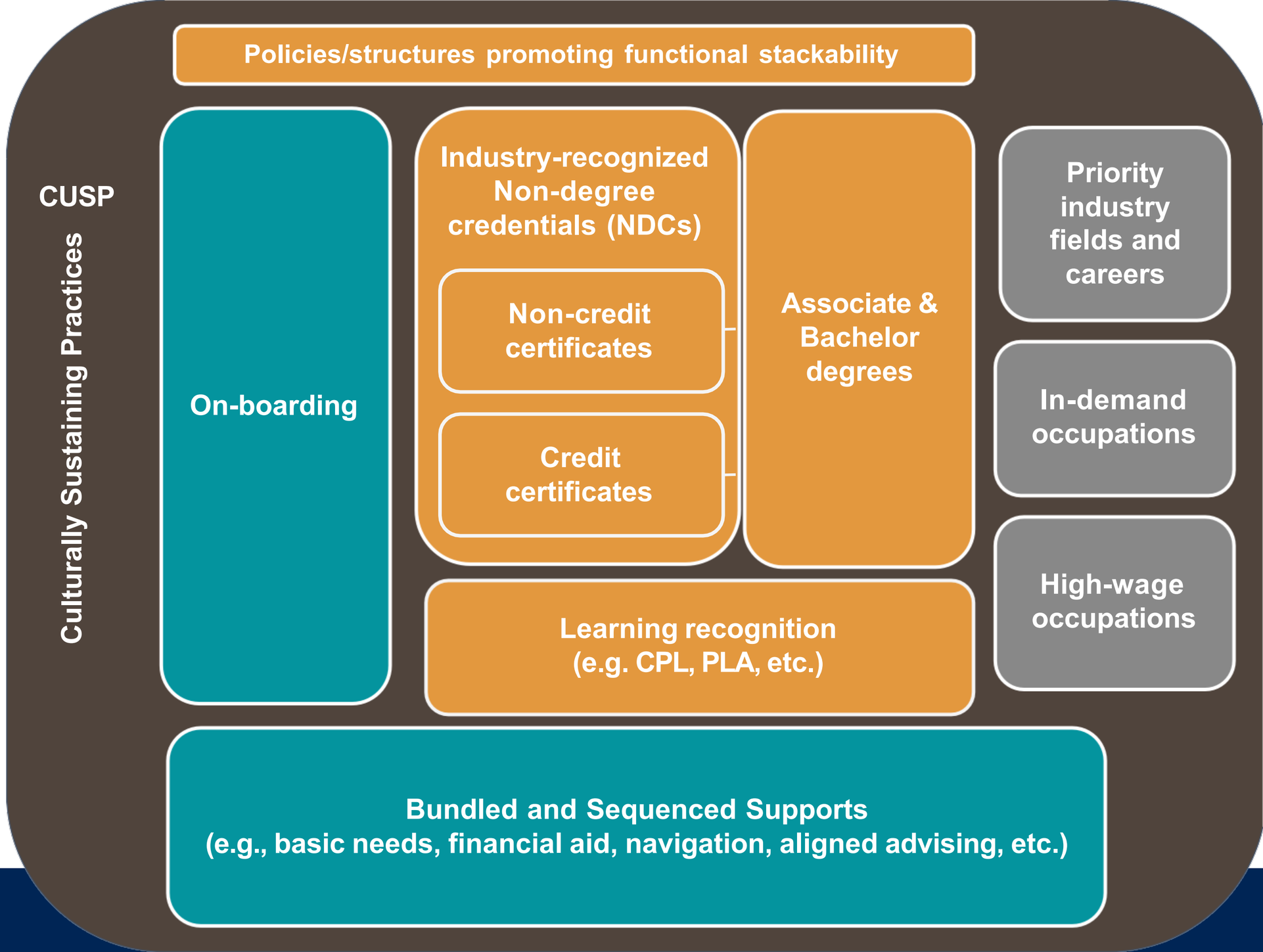
Credential to Degrees Alignment



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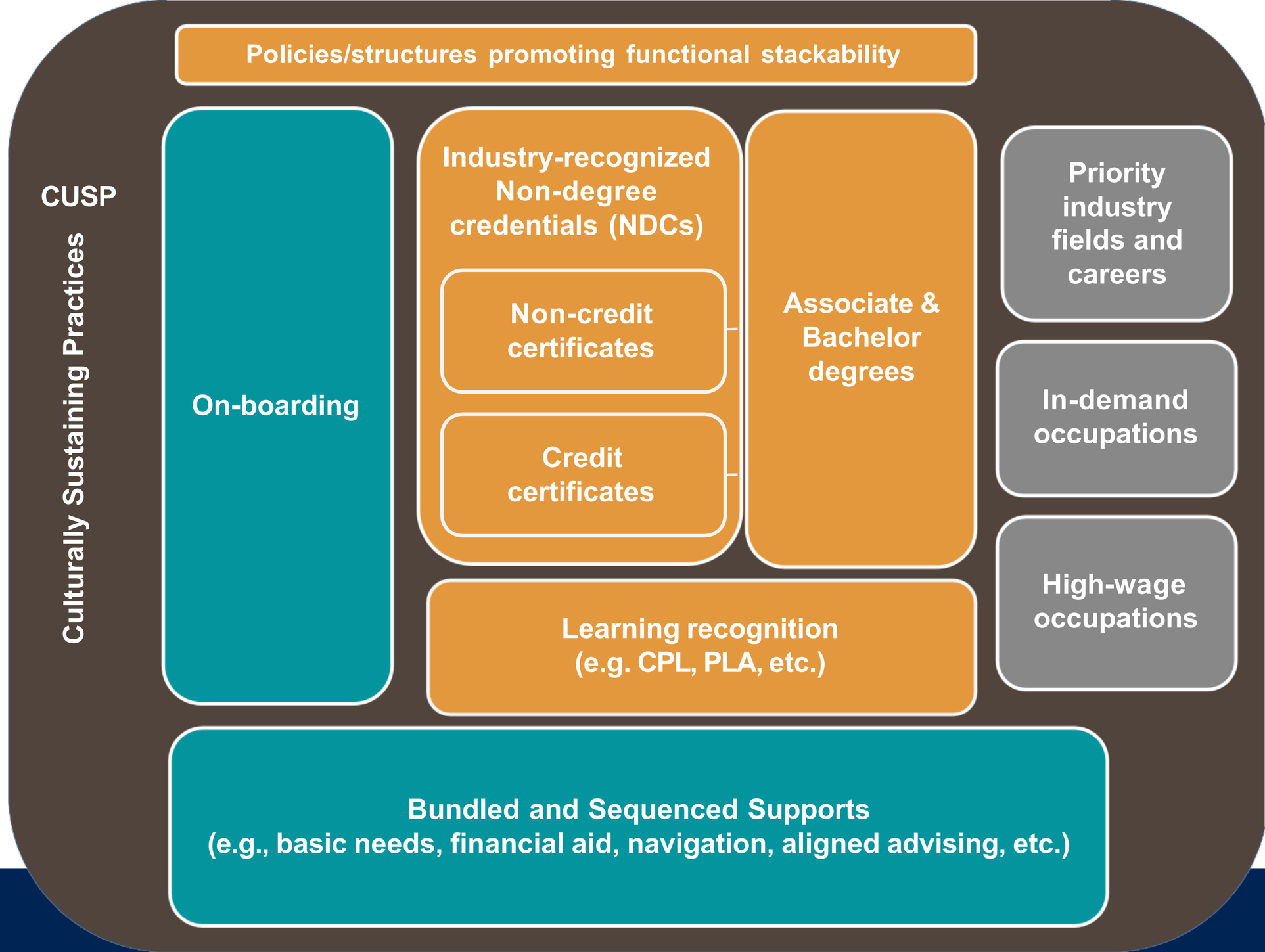

*We teach what we value.*
**–Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings**

## Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World (Paris & Alim, 2017)

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# Our Role within REACH

## Equity Level Setting: A Precursor to Culturally Sustaining Practices

- Equity Mindedness (Bensimon, 2018; Bensimon & Gray, 2020)
- Racial Consciousness (Banton, 1997; Peller, 1990)
- Equity Conscious (Zamani-Gallaher, 2020)

# Our Role within REACH

## What are Culturally Sustaining Practices?

- *Culturally Sustaining Practices* support learning, elevate student performance, and foster critical consciousness in culturally competent manners that affirm and preserve cultures (e.g., culturally diverse and multilingual competencies) (Paris & Alim, 2017).

- *Culturally Sustaining Credentialing Pathways "*reflect explicit race conscious policies, programs, and practices that actively address racialized inequities to ensure student access and success. As such, these pathways are not race avoidant or ignore ethnicity but rather engage at an individual, system, and structural level to interrogate and ameliorate inequitable experiences and outcomes among racially minoritized students" (Zamani-Gallaher, 2021).

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# OCCRL Equity Champion Consultants

| State | Consultants |
|---|---|
| California | Dr. Edward Bush, Cosumnes River College<br>Dr. Mayra Padilla, Contra Costa College |
| Colorado | Dr. Reyna Anaya, Community College of Aurora<br>Dr. Susana Munoz, Colorado State University |
| New York | Dr. Michael Baston, Cuyahoga Community College (formerly SUNY Rockland Community College)<br>Dr. Mara Lazda, Bronx Community College |
| North Carolina | Dr. Ereka Williams, Dogwood Health Trust<br>Dr. Denise Henning, University of North Carolina Wilmington |
| Texas | Dr. Luis Ponjuan, Texas A&M University<br>Dr. Richard Reddick, UT Austin |
| Virginia | Dr. Felecia Commodore, Old Dominion University<br>Dr. Pam Eddy, William & Mary |

# Poll Question 2: Culturally sustaining practices in community colleges must encompass what in your opinion?

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# What we heard from our ECCs

## On Culturally Sustaining Practices

•Codified commitments with bullets on the institution's strategic plan, scorecard and seamless intended, woven and measured from EVERY unit on the campus.

•An equity-centered approach to decision-making and policy setting, restructuring to have a student and equity designed organizational and administrative process structure

•Taking an anti-racism approach to hiring practices, on-boarding, and critical pedagogy.

•Cultural continuity, particularly amongst Latinx and Indigenous groups in the state.

•Must have long term resources and commitment from campus leadership in various college wide initiatives (strategic plan, values, data disaggregation).

# What We Heard from Our ECCs

## On Culturally Sustaining Practices

•More PD to get a shared meaning among community college stakeholders

•CSPs must include partnerships among all divisions of the community college--administration, student life, financial aid, mental health services, library, public safety, marketing, and the curriculum. There should be conversations about how each division contributes to cultural sustaining practices.

•Ongoing interrogation of institutional  policies and practices through equity and race conscious lens

•They must be grounded in community cultural wealth and reject deficit notions of students, families, and communities.

•A sense of deep care (cari`no) and a holistic approach so we are supporting the whole human in successfully completing our pathway.

# Year One in Review: Briefs

| State | Topic | |
|---|---|---|
| CA | Starting with FREEDOM IN MIND: Liberatory Guided Pathways - Moving Beyond Diversity to Racial Equity | |
| CO | Moving the Needle: Are Community Colleges in Colorado Equity-Ready? | |
| NC | REACH Initiative and Workforce Development: BIPOC Contributions to the State of North Carolina Economy | |
| NY | Building Inclusive Infrastructure to Support the Success of BIPOC Adult Learners at Community Colleges | |
| TX | How leaders advance an equity-minded agenda for racial/ethnic minoritized student groups in Texas community colleges | |
| VA | Moving Past a Check-Box Mentality: Building a Leadership Blueprint for Racial Equity for Adult Credentials | |

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# Year One in Review: Podcasts

| Topic |
| --- |
| Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogy/Pathways and Wraparound Support Services for Students of Color |
| Root Analysis and Addressing Structural Racism in Pathways |
| Moving Beyond Diversity Toward Racial Equity in Pathways |
| Scalable Implementation of Culturally Responsive Practices/Operationalizing Racial Equity and Data Disaggregation: Beyond Metrics to Action |
| Problematizing Guided Pathways from an Activist Leadership Lens |

# Year Two: Podcast Season 2

1. Resisting racial equity while trying to diversify pathways: Navigating state sociopolitical contexts
2. What is the cost of doing nothing? Redistributing power
3. How do you continue to make this work a priority with new leadership at community colleges?
4. Sustainability through the lens of culturally responsive practices in changing educational landscapes

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# Year Two: REACH Equity Insight Topics

- undocumented immigrants and issues with employability (with and without DACA) and institutional support
- Quick-bites for Training Student Service Professionals on Culturally Sustaining Processes
- The Promise of our Practices: Leveraging equity-minded learning and learner centered approaches for today's racialized, minoritized adult learner.
- Social Justice Student Leadership Certificate Series
- Helping Students Transfer and Stay on Track
- Liberatory Community College Leadership
- Prioritization of basic need support to promote overall student wellness and community college success
- Zero sum thinking and systemic change
- Book, *Restorative Resistance in Higher Education: Leading in an Era of Racial Awakening and Reckoning*
- Strategies for engaging state-level governing boards and leadership in racial equity work
- The Changing Texas Demographic Reality: At the intersections of Increased Community College Access and Academic Excellence

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# Poll Question 3: What areas of technical assistance and professional development regarding culturally sustaining practices do you think educators in your state require?

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# What we heard from our ECCs

## Areas of TA/PD

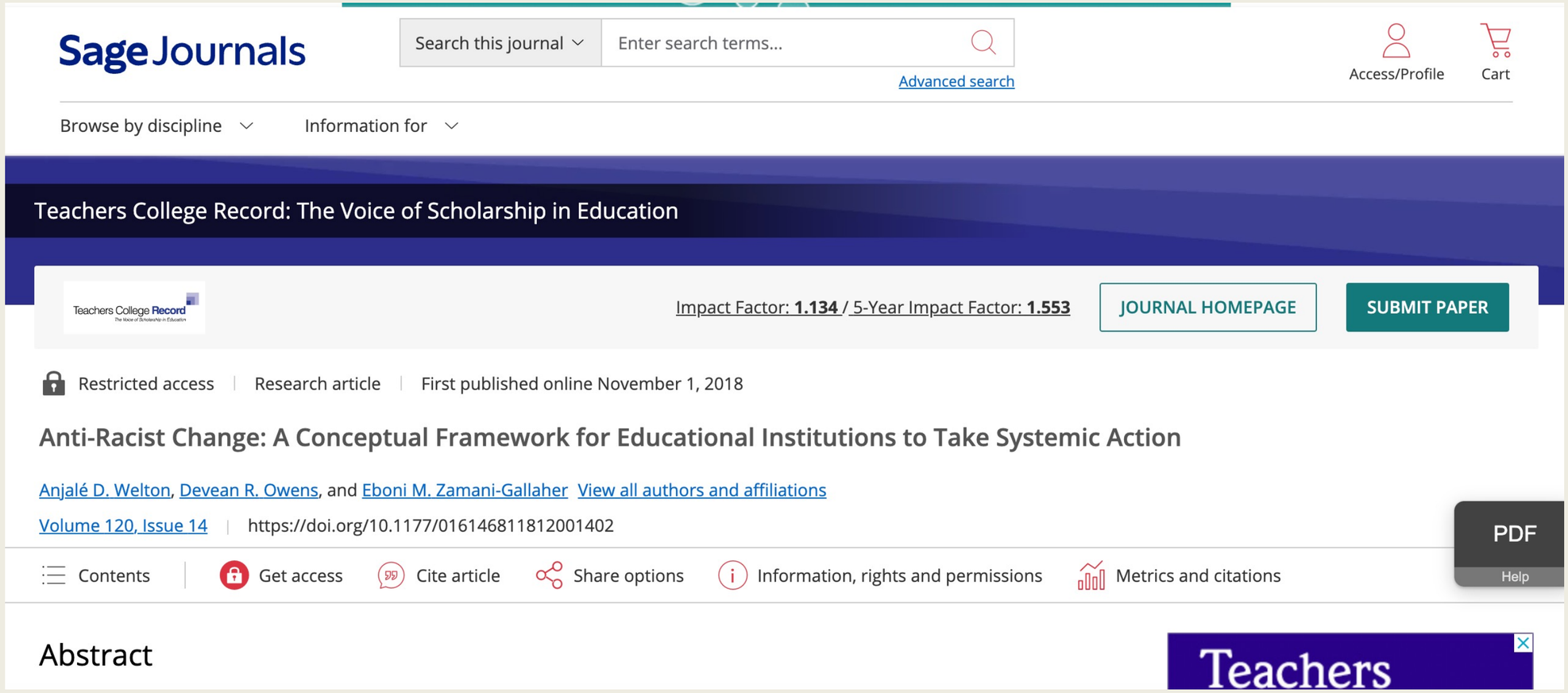
- Integrating culturally sustaining pedagogy and supports
- Using tools established
- Addressing issues of historical legacy of white supremacy, whiteness, and anti-racism
- Connecting accountability to professional development
- Teaching from other cultural perspectives
- A focus on cultural humility
- Engaging faculty as leaders
- Operationalizing practice in attempts to build anti-racist or racially conscious colleges
- Decoupling culturally sustaining practices and campus climate from political pressures
- Continuing to center racial equity, often talk in general terms because folks are resistant, scared of, talking about race

What appears to be a path to some appears to be a barrier to others.

When you take the first step, the rest of the pathway may appear…

**Unknown**

# Lessons Learned

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# Lesson 1

"Individual learning and commitment to anti-racism is necessary; however, there **must also be a commitment at the systemic level to ensure that not only are individual educators adopting and working toward anti-racism,** but that the entire organization is constantly working toward it as well." (Welton, Owens, and Zamani-Gallaher, 2018, p. 5)

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# Lesson 2

"However, research on anti-racism in education mostly centers on classroom teaching, preparing educators to be anti-racist and the resistance and politics involved in doing the work; **limited research provides concrete strategies and examples of how to invoke anti-racist change system-wide**." (Welton, Owens, & Zamani-Gallaher, 2018, p. 6)

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# Lesson 3

- There is no one right way to do this work.
- Easily distracted and not keeping focus on racially minoritized adult learners

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# Lesson 4

"Therefore, for long-term, **continuous change to occur it needs to be transformational**, which is change that is widespread throughout the institution." (Welton, Owens, & Zamani-Gallaher, 2018, p. 6)

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# Additional Resources

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**Office of Community College Research and Leadership**
**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
**College of Education**

**Champaign Office**
51 Gerty Dr
Champaign, IL 61820

**Chicago Office**
Illini Center
200 S. Wacker Drive, 19th Floor
MC-200
Chicago, IL 60606
www.occrl.illinois.edu
occrl@illinois.edu
@OCCRL

**Dr. Lorenzo Baber, Director**

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# Q & A

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