

WORKFORCE PELL IMPLEMENTATION

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Massachusetts Workforce Pell Infrastructure: A Coordinated State & Campus Model

STATEWIDE INTERAGENCY WORKFORCE PELL COMMITTEE

Membership includes
EOE, EOLWD, DHE, DUA,
DER, DAS, MACC, Commonwealth
Corporation & others

COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE PELL WORKING GROUP

Membership includes
representatives from each of the 15
community colleges

MACC

Serving on the Interagency Committee and convening the Community College Working Group,
MACC serves as a convener & collaborator to the work

WORKFORCE PELL: A COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVE

Governance & Coordination Infrastructure – charter finalized and multi-agency collaboration structure established

Stakeholder Engagement & Communications – facilitate regular cross-secretariat working sessions and implement a Year 1 Pilot Communications Plan to ensure transparency and alignment.

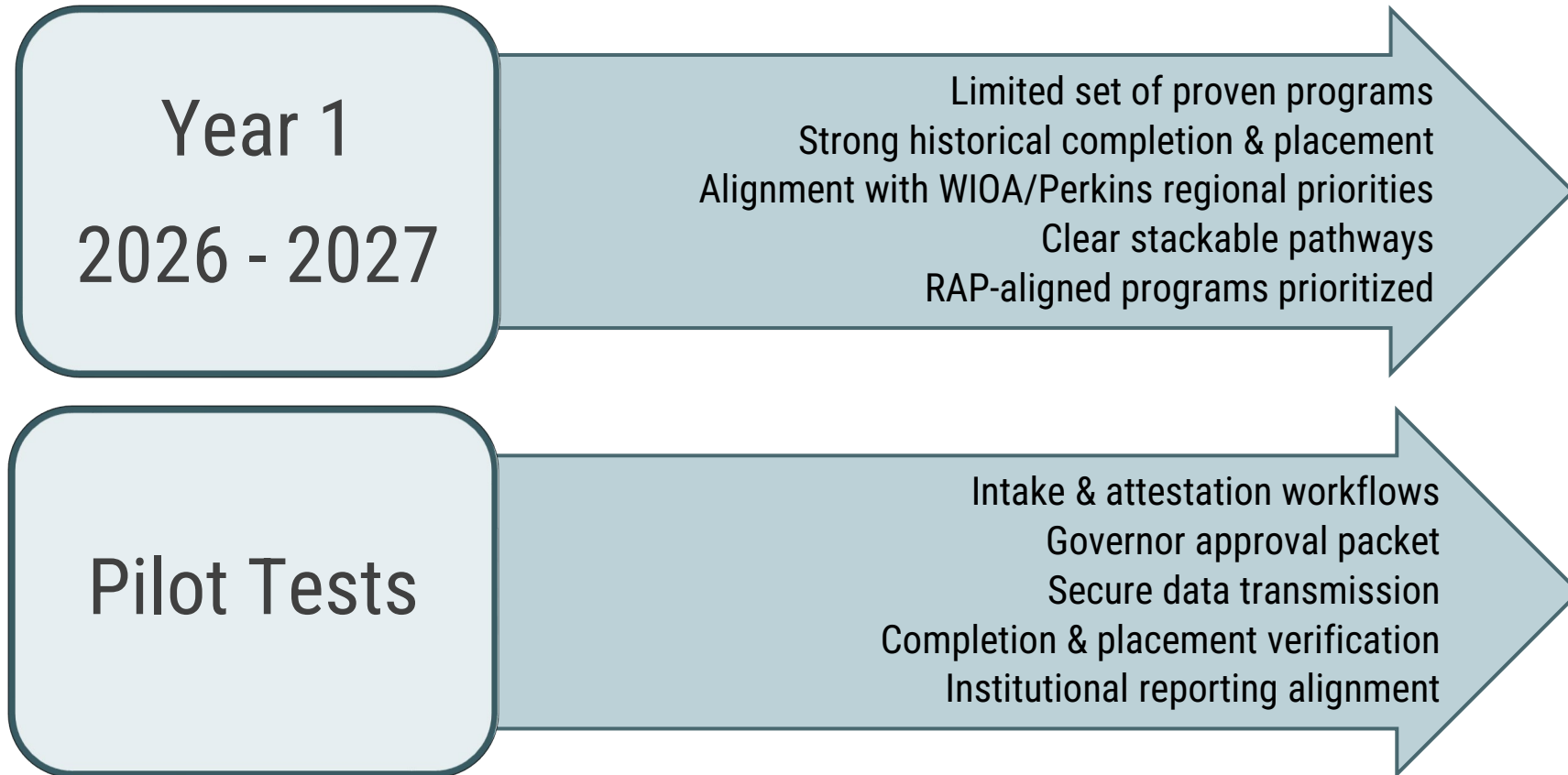
Pilot & Statewide Implementation Planning – Develop the detailed 2026 Pilot plan with milestones and prepare for full statewide rollout through 2028.

Program Eligibility & Labor Market Alignment – Define statewide labor-market criteria for Governor approval, aligned with WIOA, Perkins, regional data, employer validation, and RAP strategy (including the 10,000 RAPs/year goal).

Compliance, Reporting & Accountability Framework – Establish federal-aligned reporting requirements, including completion and job placement verification, Title IV institutional reporting, and consumer disclosure standards.

Technology, Data & Workflow Design – Document current- and future-state workflows for intake and approval processes; identify secure data architecture, integration needs, and reporting pathways to US ED, including potential credential registry infrastructure.

YEAR 1 PILOT STRATEGY (RISK MITIGATION APPROACH)



WHY THIS COORDINATED STRUCTURE MATTERS

- Early alignment reduces confusion later
- Centralized strategies can reduce reporting burden
- Cross-functional engagement is essential
- Continuous feedback loops (state to campus; campus to state) improve policy feasibility and relays concerns back to state partners

COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE PELL WORKING GROUP

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: NONCREDIT WORKFORCE CATALOG

The catalog project:

- Establishes a Statewide Baseline
- Standardizes definitions
- Aligns clock-hour to credit equivalencies
- Supports intake automation
- Prepares colleges for July 2026 eligibility review

JULY 2026 GOAL: PREPARED, ALIGNED, IMPLEMENTATION READY

Massachusetts Strategy:

- Phased rollout
- Cross-secretariat governance
- Centralized reporting alignment
- Apprenticeship integration
- Institutional readiness support



Workforce Pell

- Prepared for American Association of Community Colleges, February 2026
- Layla Merrifield, WTCS President

We were built for this moment

Strengths

- Industry and labor market-aligned programs
- Data infrastructure (Graduate outcomes, Lightcast, UI Wage Data)
- Strong existing partnerships: DWD, CWI, Governor's office
 - Immediately established Wisconsin working group of WTCS, DWD, four-year institutions
 - NGA technical assistance
- Career Pathways are well established
- Centralized program approval system

...and Challenges

- Delay in final federal regulations
- Unclear roles and responsibilities based on state-level realities
- Federal terminology without clear, agreed upon definitions
- Clear communication with colleges, students, and stakeholders

Work Plan

- Populating a common program template:
 - What is compliant
 - What is close
 - What is possible
- Formalize common definitions and sources of truth: stackability; high-wage; in-demand
- Finalize approval process with partners
- Identify and pilot initial programs; resolve sticking points

Workforce Pell Implementation

What We Know Now & What's Next ...

Tammy Green

Executive Director of Statewide Workforce Initiatives

Katie Thurber

Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Labor



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Impact

H.R. 1 (Workforce Pell) was passed on July 4, 2025.

Workforce Pell is a new federal initiative that expands Pell Grant eligibility to high quality, short-term training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials and in-demand jobs.

Strategic Mindset

Its not just a funding change – it's a systematic transformation that:

- Breaks down silos between credit and non-credit
- Expands equity and workforce readiness
- Requires technology, culture and process alignment



Game Changer for Community Colleges

Workforce Pell is a game-changer for those of us in continuing education and workforce training because it finally brings federal financial aid into the short-term credential space.

- Workforce Pell equalizes the playing field by making high-quality, short-term programs eligible for federal aid, opening doors for underserved populations and creating true pathways from quick training to sustainable careers.
- This shift transforms our work by integrating non-credit and credit systems, expanding access, and positions community colleges at the front line for workforce development.
- By removing the financial barrier, Workforce Pell transforms continuing education from an optional, pay-out-of-pocket service into a federally supported gateway to economic mobility, fundamentally changing how community colleges serve their communities and connect education to workforce needs.



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What We Know Now

- **Launch Date:** July 1, 2026 for the 2026–27 award year.
- **Program Eligibility:** 8-15 weeks, 150-599 clock hours, accredited Pell-eligible institutions, aligned to high-skill/high-wage fields, stackable credentials.
- **Performance Benchmarks:**
 - 70% completion rate
 - 70% job placement rate or higher 180 days following completion
- **The program has been offered for at least 1 year**



What We Know Now

- **Student Eligibility:** FAFSA required, Pell eligibility based on Student Aid Index, cannot receive regular Pell concurrently.
- **Federal & State Roles:** The Governor verifies that the program is aligned with “high-skill, high wage or in demand” areas.
- **Rulemaking:** Negotiated rulemaking underway; final regulations expected early 2026.
- The offering matches employer hiring criteria.
- The course/program cannot be a “correspondence course”



The program results in credentials that articulates to additional degrees and/or certificates

What does the articulation/crosswalk look like for your instruction:

At MCC:

1. Credit for Prior Learning (PLA)

- Competency based bundling

2. Credit Equate - direct course equivalent

- CompTIA A+ (non-credit) = INFO 1001 (4.5 credits)

3. Credit hour by contact hour conversion

- Credit awarded based total instructional hours
- CDL licensure



Workforce Pell Implementation

Internal
Readiness



External
Coordination



Student &
Community
Outreach



Focus on Building Systems Processes,
& Staff Capacity

- Governance and Leadership
- Financial Aid Infrastructure
- Program Readiness
- Data Compliance

Engage with Partners to Ensure Alignment with Labor
Market and Policy Compliance

- Policy - State and National
- Coordinate with Nebraska DOL
- Employer Partnerships

Drive Awareness and Enrollment Through
Targeted Campaigns

- Messaging
- Student Services

External Coordination- Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL)

NDOL Develops Process

Including:

- Dashboard for data regarding potentially eligible training areas
- Public criteria for evaluating programs
- Methodology for identifying in-demand occupations and sectors (updated every 2 years)
- Written Policies on:
 - Assessing employer hiring alignment w/high-skill, high-wage, in-demand sectors and occupations
 - Determining stackability and portability of credentials
 - Ensuring academic credit transferability
 - Submission requirements for institutions, including data needed to verify metrics

Training Provider Applies to NDOL

Application Includes:

- Proof Credential is stackable and portable across more than one employer, or it is the only credential for a specific occupation
- Program has been offered by the institution for at least one year prior to certification
- Completion Rate
- Job Placement Rate
- Value-added Earning Test

Program Approval Process

NDOL/NWDB/Governor/U.S. ED

1. Application Submission

The Training Provider submits a program application NDOL.

2. NDOL Initial Review

NDOL reviews the application to determine whether the program meets eligibility and compliance requirements.

3. Deficiency & Cure Process

- If the program does **not** meet requirements, NDOL notifies the Training Provider of deficiencies.
- The Training Provider is given an opportunity to cure (correct) the deficiencies.
- If deficiencies cannot be cured, NDOL issues an appealable determination to the Training Provider.

4. Board Review

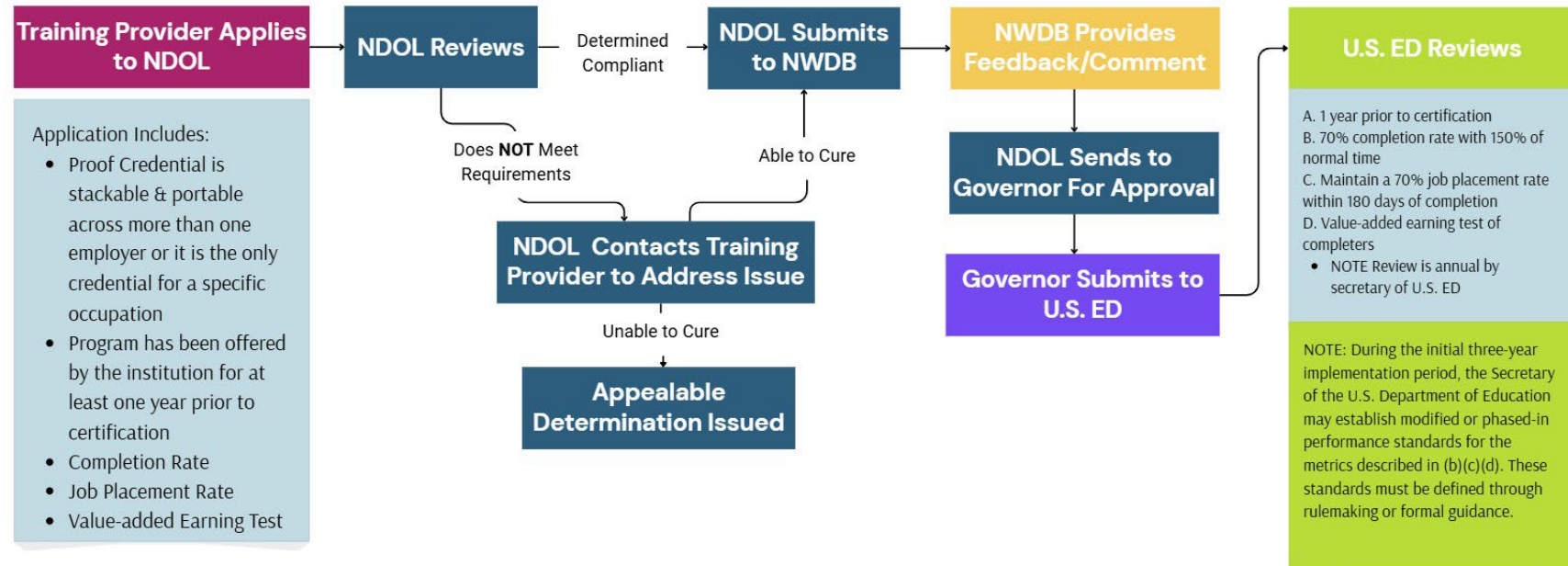
- If the program meets requirements, NDOL forwards the application to the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (NWDB) for feedback and comments.

5. Governor Review & Approval

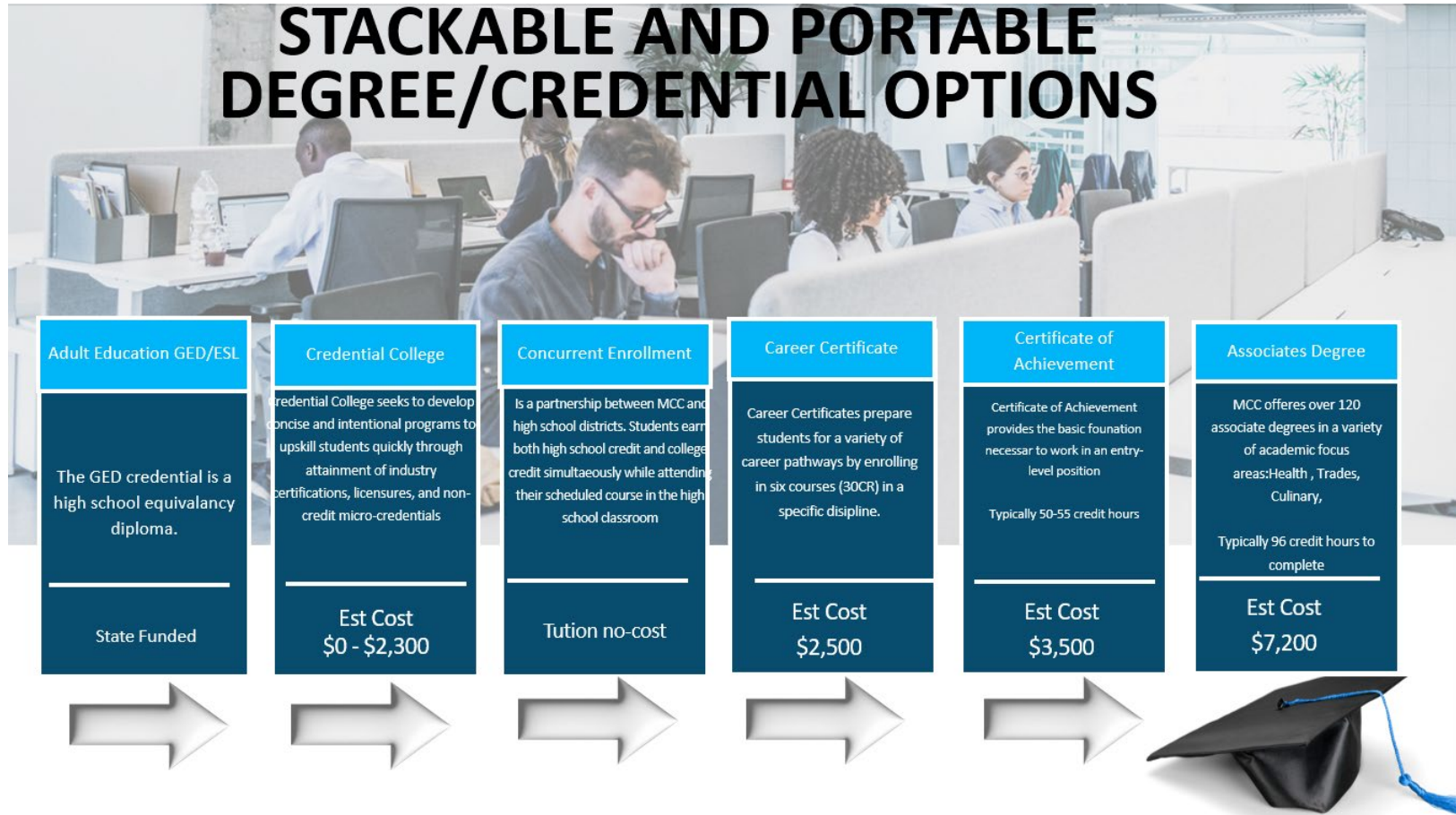
- After receiving feedback from the Board, the application is sent to the Governor for approval.

6. Federal Submission

- Upon the Governor's approval, the program is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for federal review and any required action.



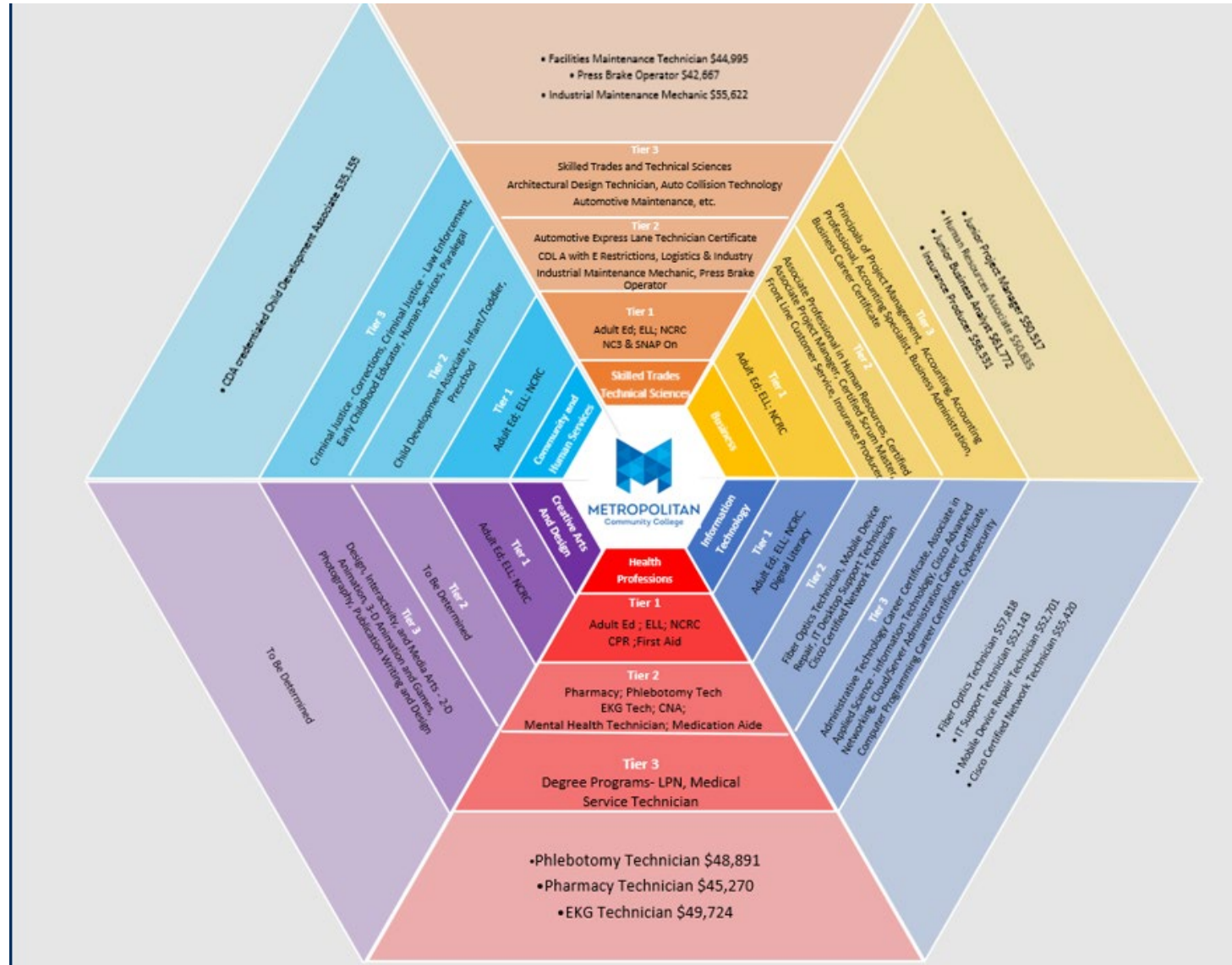
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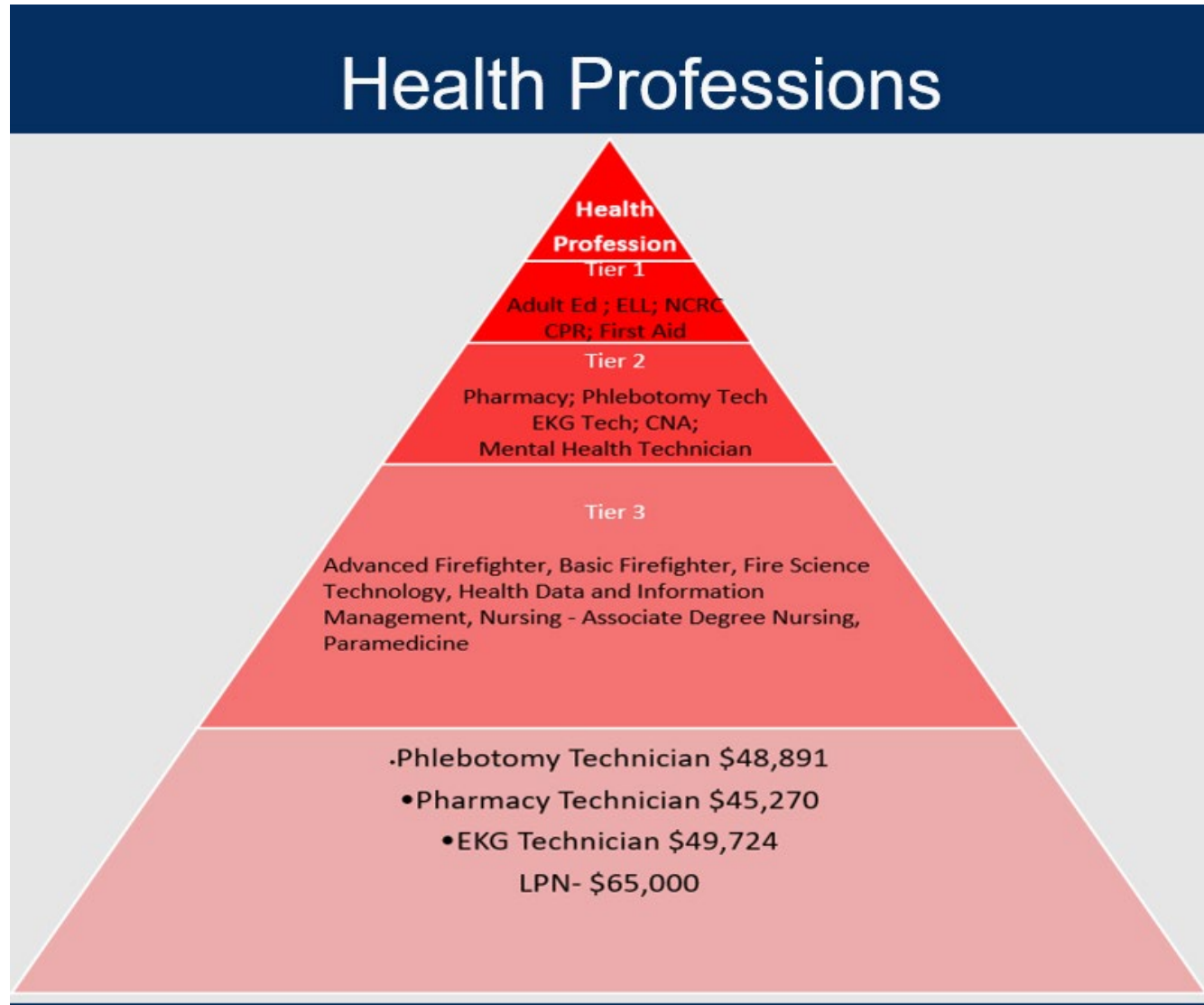
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Critical Planning Elements

1. Establish a Cross-Functional Governance Team

- Include Financial Aid, Workforce Development, Academic Affairs, IT, IE, Advising, and Marketing

2. Build a Unified Student Ecosystem

- Integrate non-credit and credit systems into one SIS

3. Establish Data & Reporting Infrastructure

- Connect to state wage record systems for post completion reporting
- Audit ready documentation for federal compliance

4. Establish Student Experience

- Registration process
- Support and career advising at entry, other wraparound services

5. Align Funding Systems

- Create a funding crosswalk for Workforce Pell, WIOA, employer-paid training, and scholarships

6. Internal Communication and Training

- Launch internal awareness campaigns for faculty and staff
- Train financial aid and advising teams on Workforce Pell rules and workflows

7. Leverage Presidential Support

- Use leadership backing to: Accelerate technology upgrades, secure staffing and to position our institution as a national leader



Challenges to Anticipate

- **Aggressive Timeline:**
 - **Less than 8 months to finalize rules and implement.**
- **Infrastructure Gaps:**
 - **Non-credit programs often lack robust integrated data systems.**
- **Quality Assurance:**
 - **Guardrails to prevent low-value programs and protect students.**



Thank You!!

For More Information

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