

# Detroit Regional Talent Compact Roadmap to Prosperity

A Masterplan for Postsecondary Credential Attainment in Detroit  
June 2020

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## Executive Summary

The economy is changing in front of our eyes, and Detroit needs to harness the wave of change to propel the region and its residents to prosperity. The coronavirus pandemic put a spotlight on the vulnerability of low-skilled workers, with less-educated workers losing work at three times the rate of those with college degrees. Success in the recovery period following COVID-19 will require significantly more postsecondary certificates, associate, and bachelor's degrees aligned with the needs of the labor market. Further, it demands close reflection and action to undo unjust structures that exist to impede college access and success among Black and Latinx students in the region. The preparation these students—young and old—receive, the opportunities afforded to them, and the effectiveness of the education and training system to support them on their path to a postsecondary credential are now more important than ever.

These educational and economic realities spurred the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council to partner with Education Strategy Group (ESG) to help the region establish a master plan to meet its two postsecondary attainment goals: 1) 60% attainment by 2030 and 2) close the racial equity gap by half in that same time period. In preparing this plan, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council and ESG conducted a regional survey, reviewed current reports, analyzed publicly-available data, and facilitated workgroup meetings involving postsecondary institutional leaders, school and district administrators, nonprofit organizations, employers, philanthropists, and other representatives from the workforce system. The resulting master plan includes strategies in four priorities necessary to reach the goal.



To estimate the region's current trajectory toward both the goal of 60% attainment and the goal of reducing the racial equity gap by half, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council, in partnership with both the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and ESG, reviewed Detroit's current performance data across the K-12 and postsecondary sectors. These data were analyzed to better understand the scope of the challenge facing the region and current gaps that need to be closed. The review revealed three critical takeaways:

1. The region needs to significantly accelerate the current pace of postsecondary credential attainment. If Detroit continues on the existing trajectory of performance, it will fall about 135,000 credentials short of its attainment goal.
2. There is currently a 17 percentage point gap in attainment levels between Black and white working-age adults in the region, and a 16 percentage point gap between Latinx and white communities. If the region is going to reduce these gaps by half and achieve the overall 60% attainment goal, over 90,000 Black and 15,000 Latinx students will need to earn degrees in the next decade.
3. Targeting improvements in enrollment and success from each group of students—high school youth, students currently enrolled in postsecondary education, and adult learners—is necessary to meet the goal. This also means ensuring alignment with labor market needs, so talent in the region is adequately prepared for the next step after a credential.

Based on takeaways from the trajectory analysis, along with the survey and workgroup meetings, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council arrived at a comprehensive plan for closing these gaps and meeting its goals. Recognizing that these 17 strategies will not be achieved overnight, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council has set timelines for implementation, identifying each strategy as an immediate, short-term, or long-term priority. These timelines were set based on relative urgency and efficiency of implementation, versus those strategies that are more holistic in nature and therefore take longer to yield results. While the designations indicate milestones for implementation, all of these strategies require advance planning, which the Leadership Council will be factoring into its work as it moves to actualize these strategies.

Finally, each priority includes at least one indicator and an associated target for improvement, which when added together, will close the 135,000 person gap predicted in 2030. The numbers of additional credentials and degrees that could result from improvements across sectors are meant to illustrate the scale of improvement necessary in the region—and it is the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council's hope that aggressive implementation of the recommendations included in this report will help Detroit meet and exceed these estimates.

## Improving Postsecondary Access

**Strategy 1.1:** Dramatically increase college and career advising beginning in 9th grade. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 1.2:** Develop a regional effort to combat summer melt. (Immediate priority)

**Strategy 2.1:** Implement postsecondary transition courses across the region. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 2.2:** Expand early postsecondary options so all students equitably participate without sacrificing quality. (Long-term priority)

### Indicators & Targets for 2030:

↑ enrollment by 20% of students within 12 months of high school graduation

↑ participation in college readiness interventions by 20%

## Boosting Postsecondary Success

**Strategy 3.1:** Expand use of multiple measures to place students directly in credit-bearing mathematics and English courses. (Immediate priority)

**Strategy 3.2:** Scale up implementation of corequisite models of remediation in both mathematics and English. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 4.1:** Incentivize full- and part-time students to maximize the credits they complete each year. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 4.2:** Build institutional capacity to provide intrusive advising that uses predictive analytics and technology. (Short-term priority)

### Indicators & Targets for 2030:

↓ traditional remedial course placement by 80%

↑ student progression by 75%

## Advancing Adult Attainment

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish a regional scholarship program for adult learners. (Immediate priority)

**Strategy 5.2:** Expand debt-forgiveness programs region-wide, including reciprocity across institutions. (Immediate priority)

**Strategy 5.3:** Increase the number of employers providing upskilling incentives to their employees. (Long-term priority)

**Strategy 6.1:** Double-down on the number and quality of community-linked adult student navigators in the region. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 6.2:** Expand accelerated, adult-friendly degree program structures. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 6.3:** Use a consistent approach to recognize prior learning at institutions. (Long-term priority)

### Indicators & Targets for 2030:

↑ **Double adult enrollment in the region**

↑ **adult completion by 35%**

## Preparing Regional Talent

**Strategy 7.1:** Identify and promote postsecondary “credentials of value” that align with high-wage, high-demand industries. (Immediate priority)

**Strategy 7.2:** Scale up, phase out, and build new pathways at the K-12 and postsecondary level that align with high-demand, high-wage opportunities. (Short-term priority)

**Strategy 7.3:** Strengthen regional capacity to coordinate and scale quality work-based learning across secondary and postsecondary schools. (Long-term priority)

### Indicators & Targets for 2030:

↑ **non-degree credential completion by 2,000 credentials**

## Introduction:

# Talent Development in the Detroit Region

The Detroit region has a long history as a hub of extraordinary innovation, with iconic leaders who forever changed the way our nation looks at manufacturing, products, processes, and services. In 2020, that innovation continues through young visionaries and entrepreneurial moguls reshaping the landscape and face of the Motor City. These successes, both now and in the past, have rested on one finite resource: skilled talent.

But the talent needed today is different than it was a generation ago. Sixty years ago, the route to economic and career success in the Detroit region was simple and direct: graduate from high school and find a blue-collar technical job or white-collar clerical role, each of which provided stable employment and paid good wages. For today's students, that reliable sequence no longer holds true. Technological advances have fundamentally reshaped the economy and triggered changes in the landscape of postsecondary education and career opportunities. At the same time, our Black and Latinx community members continue to face institutional barriers - including inequitable access to quality elementary and high schools and rapidly declining government investment in public higher education. In 2019, nearly 90% of jobs in the region paying a family-sustaining wage required a postsecondary degree or credential. Yet our community has not kept up with those changes. For instance, between 2014 and 2018, the Detroit metropolitan region added approximately 155,000 new jobs<sup>1</sup>, but the number of individuals migrating into or earning a postsecondary credential or degree in the region only increased by about 100,000<sup>2</sup> in that same time period. This reality is threatening the region's ability to innovate and remain competitive with peers across the nation.

Recognizing these shifts, the Detroit Regional Chamber established Detroit Drives Degrees, an initiative to increase the proportion of individuals with college degrees and high-quality postsecondary credentials in the region. Detroit Drives Degrees has two primary goals:

1. Increase the number of Detroit residents with a postsecondary credential or degree to 60% by 2030.
2. Close the racial equity gap by half in that same time period.

Over the last five years since Detroit Drives Degrees was established, the region has made considerable progress toward these goals. In partnership with the Detroit College Access Network, Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU), Michigan College Access Network, local school districts and others, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates for the city of Detroit have dramatically improved, moving from a baseline of 54% to 73% in just a few years. Detroit Promise, and the student success program the Detroit Promise Path, have served thousands of students in the region. The Chamber's Detroit Reconnect adult program helps Detroiters over the age of 25 return to or connect for the first time with higher education in order to gain new skills, advance in the workplace, and fulfill lifelong dreams of completing a degree or credential. Detroit's regional education providers have also been on the

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<sup>1</sup> From the Detroit Regional Chamber 2019-2020 State of the Region Report

<sup>2</sup> These figures were calculated based on U.S. Census estimates for population and associate degree or higher attainment rates in the 11-county Southeast Michigan region from 2014-2018. An additional 4% was added on to the attainment rate totals to account for high-quality certificate holders as estimated by the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce.

forefront of innovation, with institutions like Wayne State University, Oakland University and Henry Ford College pioneering a debt-forgiveness partnership to ensure small account holds are not a barrier for our residents to return to education. For these efforts and more, Detroit has received national recognition, including being designated a Talent Hub by the Lumina and Kresge Foundations.

These accomplishments signal the power of a collective approach to attainment; yet the region still has a long way to go to reach its goals. In 2019, the Detroit Regional Chamber released its first-ever State of Education Report. It highlighted some troubling facts, including:

- Postsecondary readiness scores, as measured by a 1060 or higher on the SAT, declined by three percentage points between 2013 and 2017.
- Despite success in the city of Detroit to increase FAFSA completion rates, the region collectively still leaves approximately \$205 million of federal aid unclaimed each year.
- While the percent of four-year students completing their first year of coursework within 12 months of starting college has risen slightly since 2013, the rates at two-year institutions have been declining<sup>3</sup>.
- There are 695,000 adults in the region who have some postsecondary experience but “stopped out” before earning a credential.
- Perhaps most concerning, Black students who entered one of the nine public colleges in the region in 2013 completed a credential at half the rate of their white and Asian peers, on average.<sup>4</sup>

If the region is not vigilant about closing these gaps, they are likely to widen during the recovery period following the coronavirus shutdown. Recent studies of the recovery period following the Great Recession of 2008-2009 indicate economic and social benefits were inequitably distributed. In particular, education budget cuts as an outcome of the Great Recession resulted in higher student debt burdens, a decrease in student test scores, and in many communities of color, a decrease in college attendance. The inequitable effects of COVID-19 have already been observed in the Detroit region. In the Detroit metro area, the Black-white gap in loss of employment income is 38 percentage points, with a shocking 85% of Black adults having experienced such a loss.<sup>5</sup> Ensuring the region has an equitable recovery rests on leaders taking immediate, strategic action to close these gaps.

While the coronavirus pandemic has given greater urgency to this work, the economic and educational disparities that already existed in the region are the impetus for this master plan. In collaboration with Education Strategy Group (ESG), a mission-driven consulting firm with significant experience supporting state and regional educational attainment work through cross-sector collaboration, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council has developed this comprehensive plan for meeting the region’s two goals. It establishes four major priority areas for focusing action across sectors and institutions in the region that were identified through a six-month process, which included a stakeholder survey and in-person workgroups, data analyses, and benchmarking against national best practices. They include:

- Improving Postsecondary Access.
- Boosting Postsecondary Success.
- Advancing Adult Attainment.

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<sup>3</sup> The Detroit Regional Chamber acknowledges this trend could be a result of increased part-time enrollment at community colleges in the region.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is sourced from MI School Data. Completion is defined by 150% time at either a two-year or four-year institution.

<sup>5</sup>From “Racial Gaps in Lost Employment Income Divide Americans in the COVID-19 Downturn,” by Anthony P. Carnevale, June 2020, *Medium*.



- Preparing Regional Talent.

These priorities and associated strategies lay out a clear roadmap for how the Detroit region can close equity gaps by half and reach 60% by 2030. To truly support students who have faced greater obstacles to accessing and completing higher education, the region will need to focus first and foremost on its equity goal. This will demand all stakeholders in Detroit to be deliberate in the design and execution of all strategies and interventions laid out in this plan so they truly address and remove barriers that Black and Latinx students face when pursuing higher education. When implemented together and with a clear eye toward racial equity, these strategies have the potential to meet—and even exceed—both of the region’s postsecondary attainment goals.

## Mapping the Way for Detroit

The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council, in partnership with both the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and ESG, reviewed Detroit’s current performance data across the K-12 and postsecondary sectors to better understand the scope of the challenge facing the region. As detailed below, these data were analyzed to estimate the region’s current trajectory toward reaching both the goal of 60% attainment and the goal of reducing the racial equity gap by half. ESG also estimated the impact that improvements in critical indicators could have on the attainment numbers. Our review revealed three critical takeaways:

1. The region needs to significantly accelerate the current pace of postsecondary credential attainment. If Detroit continues on the current trajectory of performance, it will fall about 135,000 credentials short of its attainment goal.
2. There is currently a 17 percentage point gap in attainment levels between Black and white working-age adults in the region, and a 16 percentage point gap between Latinx and white communities. If the region is going to reduce these gaps by half and achieve the overall 60% attainment goal, over 90,000 Black and 15,000 Latinx students will need to earn degrees or credentials in the next decade.
3. Targeting improvements in enrollment and success from each group of students—high school youth, students currently enrolled in postsecondary education, and adult learners—is necessary to meet the goal. This also means ensuring alignment with labor market needs, so talent in the region is adequately prepared for the next step after a credential.

### *The Scope of Detroit’s Attainment Gaps*

Detroit is making progress in meeting its two ambitious goals. Since they were established, attainment rates in the Detroit region have increased by three percentage points.<sup>6</sup> If the region continues on its current trajectory for attainment, an additional 130,000 individuals will earn a postsecondary credential by 2030. However, if the region is going to reach its 60% goal and its equity goal, it will not only have to maintain this progress but also significantly increase the number of youth and adults enrolling in postsecondary programs and earning credentials beyond a high school degree.

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<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the term Detroit Region and regional estimates and projections are based on the six county Detroit Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), comprising Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Lapeer, Livingston, and St. Clair Counties.

### Trajectory: 60 Percent Postsecondary Attainment Goal

In 2018, the Detroit region had approximately 2.3 million working-age adults ages 25-64. NCHEMS estimates approximately 47% of these working-age adults (1.1 million) held at least one high-value postsecondary certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree. Accounting for Detroit's aging population and smaller cohorts of rising high school students, 60% attainment necessitates approximately 1,355,000 Detroiters with a postsecondary credential or degree in 2030. Based on current trends of increased attainment and in-migration of adults with postsecondary credentials, NCHEMS predicts the region is currently on track to add 130,000 adults with credentials by 2030.

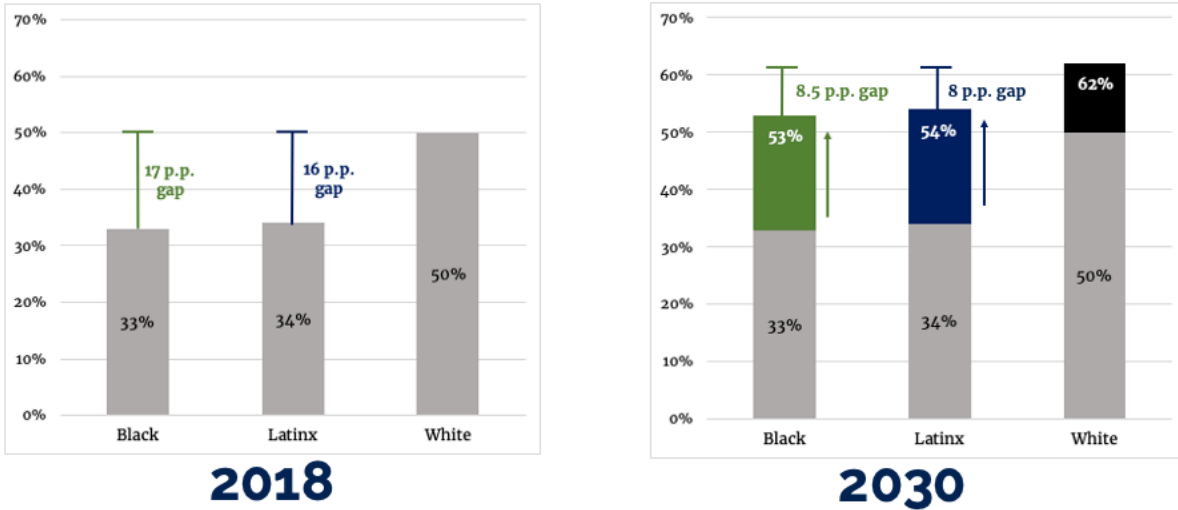
This means [Detroit will need to support an additional 135,000 individuals in attaining a postsecondary credential over the next 10 years to meet its goal.](#)



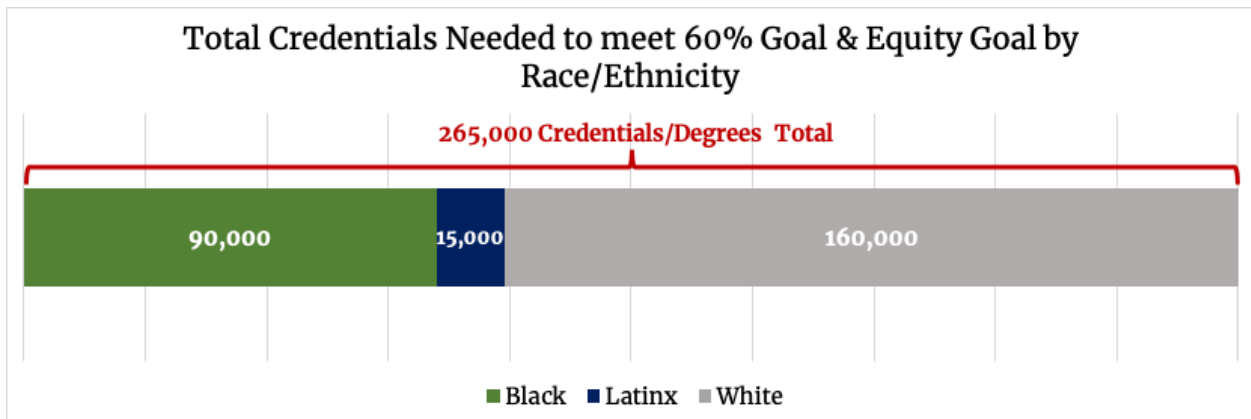
### Current Gap: Reduce the Attainment Equity Gap by Half

The legacy of racism and inequities in access to education in the region have limited opportunities for far too many Black residents to earn postsecondary credentials and degrees. Our smaller, but rapidly growing Latinx community, likewise faces significant barriers in pursuing higher education. Based on an analysis of Census data, ESG estimates that 33% of the region's 480,000 Black working-age adults currently hold postsecondary credentials or degrees. Similarly, approximately 34% of 80,000 Latinx working-age adults hold postsecondary credentials or degrees. This compares with 50% of the 1,590,000 white working-age adults. The Detroit region needs to increase attainment among residents of all races and ethnicities to achieve its 60% goal, but reducing the racial equity gap by half demands commitment from all stakeholders to dramatically increase the pipeline of Black and Latinx students pursuing and succeeding in higher education.

## Close Black-White and Latinx-White Attainment Gaps in Half and reach 60% overall by 2030



To reduce the racial equity gap in attainment by half and achieve the overall 60% attainment goal, over 90,000 Black and 15,000 Latinx students will need to earn degrees in the next decade. Combined, this represents 40% of the 265,000 projected and additional degrees Detroiters of all races and ethnicities need to earn by 2030.



## Projections to Close Detroit's Attainment Gap

Recognizing the scope of the challenge facing the Detroit region, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council asked ESG to estimate the magnitude of change across the education pipeline that is required to meet the goal of 60% attainment and close the 135,000 credential gap predicted in 2030.<sup>7</sup> The number of

<sup>7</sup> An important note: These estimates only address the goal of reaching 60% attainment by 2030. This is not intended to signify this goal as more important than the goal to reduce the equity gap in half. Rather, it is a reflection of the availability of disaggregated data on race/ethnicity for each indicator. Moving forward, the Detroit Drives

additional credentials and degrees that could result from aggressive improvements across sectors is meant to illustrate the scale of improvement necessary in the region—and it is our hope that implementation of the recommendations included in this report will help Detroit meet and exceed these estimates.

To estimate the scale of change needed to close gaps, ESG identified key points along the education continuum where students in the region are losing the most momentum toward a credential. These loss points, or challenges, emerged through the strategic planning process and were identified from regional reports, data hubs, stakeholder surveys and workgroup meetings. These seven challenges, which are described in greater detail in the next section, are as follows:

1. **Challenge #1:** Direct from high school postsecondary enrollment rates in the region are declining, especially among Black and Latinx students.
2. **Challenge #2:** Not all students in the Detroit region are ready for the academic rigors of college.
3. **Challenge #3:** Current remediation models and placement policies are limiting the number of students succeeding in gateway mathematics and English.
4. **Challenge #4:** Interventions that demonstrably improve student progression and persistence have been difficult to scale.
5. **Challenge #5:** Despite clear economic benefits, college enrollment rates for adults age 25 and older have remained stagnant in recent years.
6. **Challenge #6:** Postsecondary programs and services are not always designed with the adult learner in mind.
7. **Challenge #7:** Not all pathways are aligned with high-wage, high-demand careers, and access to those that are aligned is inequitable.

For each of the seven challenges described above, ESG identified an associated metric and estimated a target for improvement, which when added together, will close the 135,000 person gap predicted in 2030. To estimate these targets, ESG first captured the baseline rate and baseline denominator for each indicator, which were sourced from the Chamber’s State of Education 2019-2020 report, MISchoolData.org, Census, and other regional sources. ESG then estimated the potential degree/credential yield of a given increase, based on rigorous impact studies on the effect of each indicator on postsecondary attainment. Each baseline, target, and associated credential yield is described below and summarized in Table 1.

**Direct from High School Enrollment (within 12 months of graduation)**

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
68%	82%

Reaching these targets will yield an additional **6,500 students per year** enrolling in postsecondary education within one year of high school graduation. By 2030, an estimated **30,000 additional students** could earn postsecondary credentials.

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Degrees Leadership Council will put a high priority on disaggregating the data by specific subgroups to monitor indicators of progress leading toward the goal of 90,000 Black and 15,000 Latinx new degree-earners by 2030.

**College Readiness: Transition Courses and Early Postsecondary Options**

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
Unknown <sup>8</sup>	Additional 20% of graduates

Each year approximately **47,000 students** graduate from approximately 275 metropolitan Detroit public high schools. If an additional 20% participate in an early postsecondary or transition course, **9,400 more students** will engage in college readiness activities in high school every year. This could yield an additional **6,000 students** earning postsecondary credentials by 2030.

**Traditional Remedial Course Placement<sup>9</sup>**

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
26%	5%

Detroit Drives Degrees estimates **over 9,000** first-time in college students enroll in traditional remedial courses each year. Dramatically reducing these rates through placement and instructional reform could yield an additional **7,000 students earning postsecondary credentials** by 2030.

**Student Progression<sup>10</sup>**

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
41%	72%

Detroit Drives Degrees estimates **25,000 first-time in college students** complete 24 credits within the first 12 months of enrolling in college. Increasing to 72% would mean 19,000 additional students will make this key progress toward a credential each year, yielding an additional **16,000 students** earning postsecondary credentials by 2030.

<sup>8</sup> Due to changes in state data reporting last year, we do not currently have data on the percent of Detroit regional high school students participating in early postsecondary courses. Transition Courses, as envisioned in the strategy, are currently non-existent in the region.

<sup>9</sup> Detroit Drives Degrees would prefer to measure gateway course placement and completion rather than traditional remedial course placement because it better incentivizes remedial education reform. However, without consistent data collection on a gateway course indicator, reducing traditional remedial course placement is adequate for setting baselines and targets. Future monitoring and reporting should also measure adult student placement in traditional remedial coursework.

<sup>10</sup> Presently, the region measures student progression as completion of 24 credits within the first 12 months of enrolling, as this number is reported at the state level. Moving forward, Detroit Drives Degrees will measure student progression as completion of 30 credits for full-time students and is exploring appropriate metrics for part-time students, such as uninterrupted enrollment and part-time students who take at least one semester full-time. Future monitoring and reporting should also measure adult student progression.

### Adult Enrollment

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
8,000	16,000

Each year approximately **8,000 adult students** in the Detroit region enter college for the first time or return after an extended absence. Aggressive efforts could **double** adult enrollment, given the potential pool of 1.2 million working-age adults who do not possess a postsecondary credential or degree. By 2030, we estimate this increase in enrollments could result in **24,000 additional adults** earning postsecondary credentials.

### Adult Completion

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
32% <sup>11</sup>	52%

Each year approximately **2,500 adult students** in the Detroit region earn associate and bachelor's degrees. We recommend targeting a 20 percentage point growth in this figure and estimate it could result in about **30,000 additional adults** earning postsecondary credentials.

### Credentials of Value

Current Baseline	Recommended Target
Unknown	2,000 additional

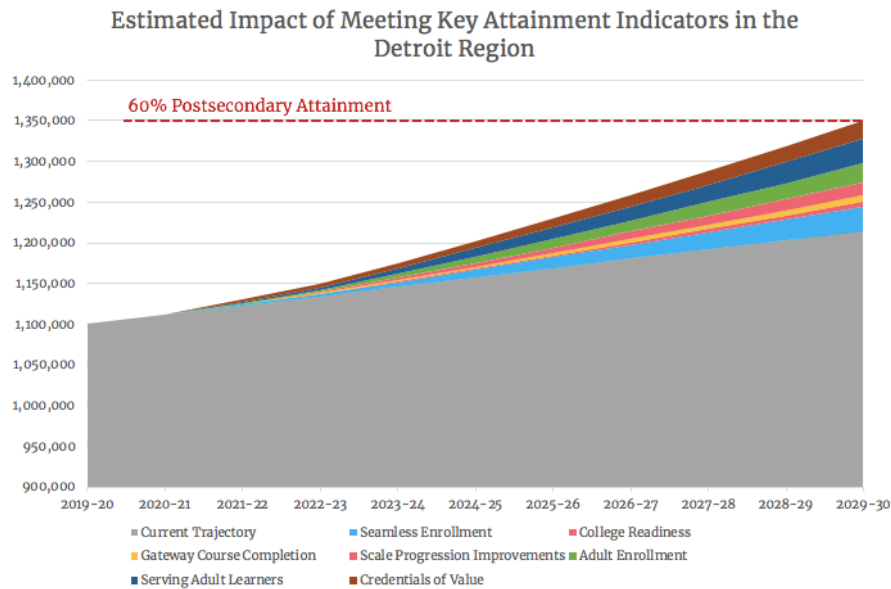
Many of the possible measurements of talent preparation in the region represent an outcome rather than an indicator of success. Based on the goals of Detroit Drives Degrees, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council would like to set a target for earned “credentials of value” that includes both degree and high-quality non-degree credentials identified by employers. The region is considering a target of **2,000 additional high-quality, non-degree credentials** earned by youth and adults each year, above and beyond those who ultimately earn more advanced postsecondary degrees. By 2030, we estimate this increase in enrollments could result in **11,000 – 22,000 additional adults** earning postsecondary credentials.

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<sup>11</sup> We have not yet analyzed data specifically on adult student completion rates for colleges and universities located in the Detroit region. The baseline reported is a national average from the National Student Clearinghouse. In establishing the key performance indicator, a baseline should be calculated using state or institutional data.

Table 1. Summary of Key Performance Indicators		
Sector	Key Indicator	Estimated Credential Yield
Postsecondary Access	Direct from High School Enrollment	30,000
	College Readiness	6,000
Postsecondary Success	Remediation Placement & Reform	7,000
	Student Progression	16,000
Adult Attainment	Adult Enrollment	24,000
	Adult Completion	30,000
Talent Preparation	Credentials of Value	22,000
		<b>Total: 135,000</b>

These targets are ambitious, reflecting Detroit’s ambitious regional goals. However, as demonstrated from the visuals below, if gaps such as the ones identified above are intentionally addressed through high-impact strategies laid out in this report, Detroit’s postsecondary attainment goal is very much achievable.



## Looking Ahead

Moving forward, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council acknowledges the need to continually monitor and track progress on these key indicators throughout the region. **Working with our regional data partners and institutions, Detroit Drives Degrees will regularly develop progress reports on these indicators to guide ongoing discussions and implementation efforts in the years to come.** Likewise, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is requesting that institutions consider how to meaningfully integrate these indicators into their institutional action plans as a part of the Detroit Regional Talent Compact.

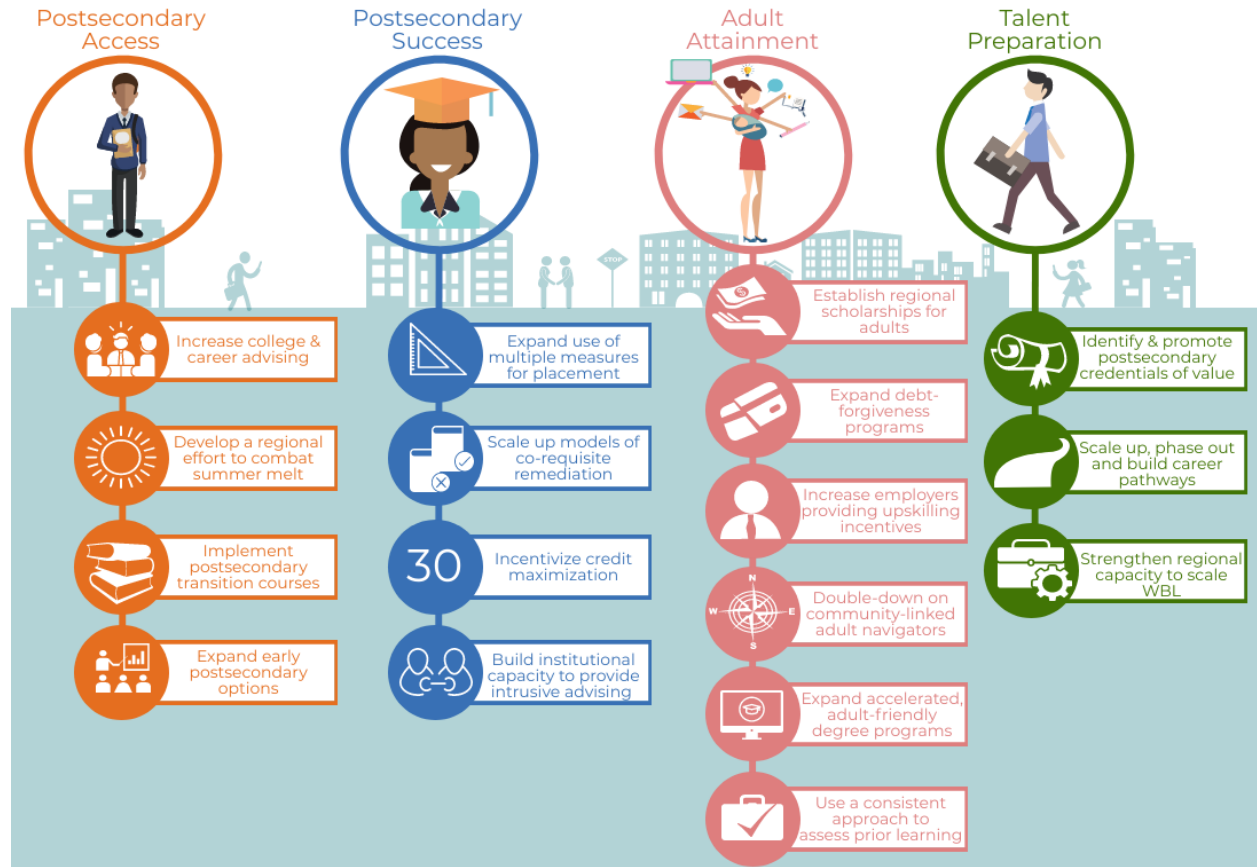
**Finally, in addition to monitoring progress, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council, Detroit Drives Degrees staff, and regional philanthropies are collaborating to establish regional rewards to recognize higher education institutions and school districts that make significant progress toward demonstrating improvements on these indicators.**

## Priorities to Deliver on the Goals

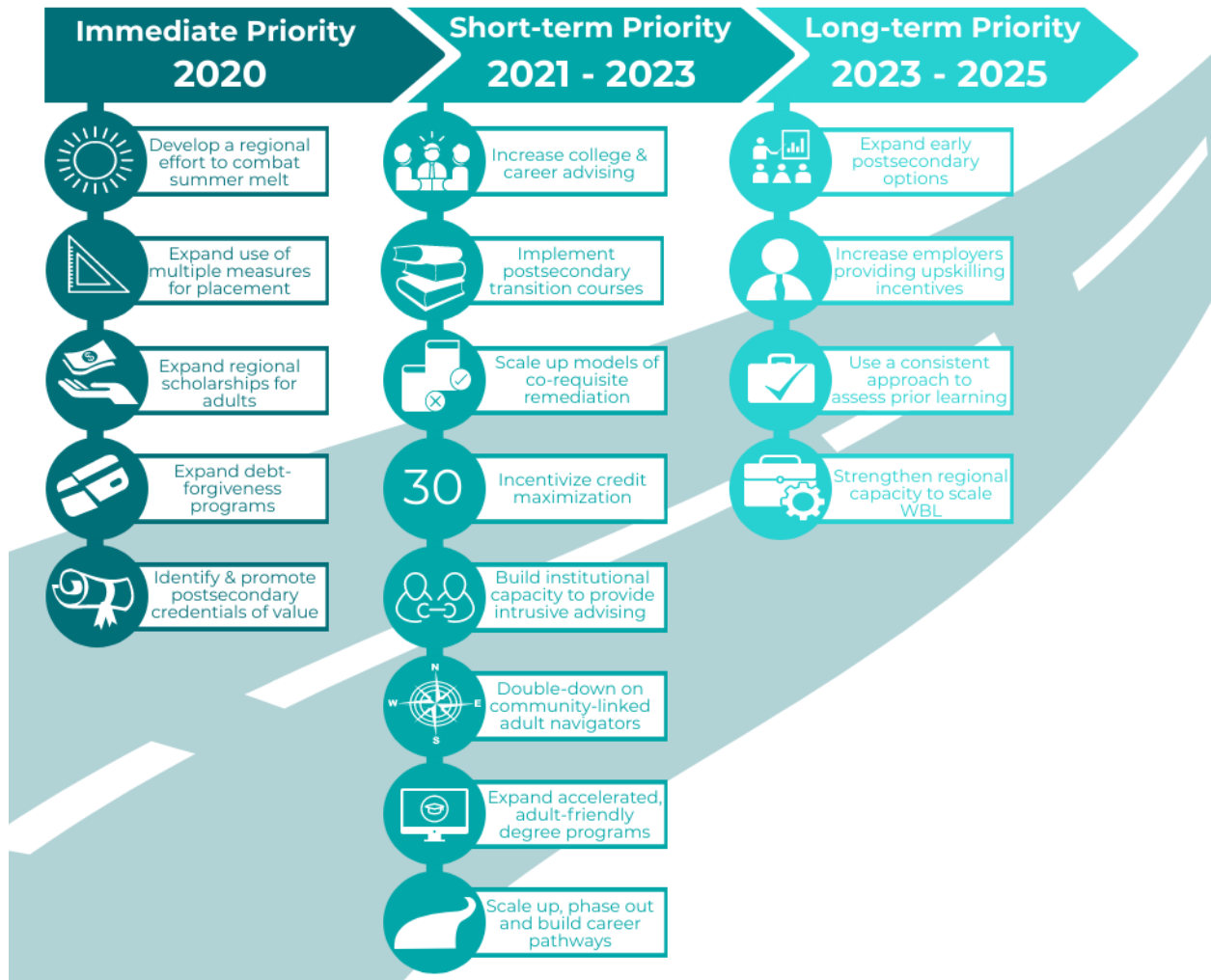
Based on takeaways from the trajectory analysis, as well as regional reports, the stakeholder survey, and workgroup meetings, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council arrived at a comprehensive plan for meeting its goals, which establishes four major priority areas for focusing action across sectors and institutions. These priorities and strategies are summarized in the visual below and described in more detail in the next four sections.



## Detroit Drives Degrees Strategic Priorities



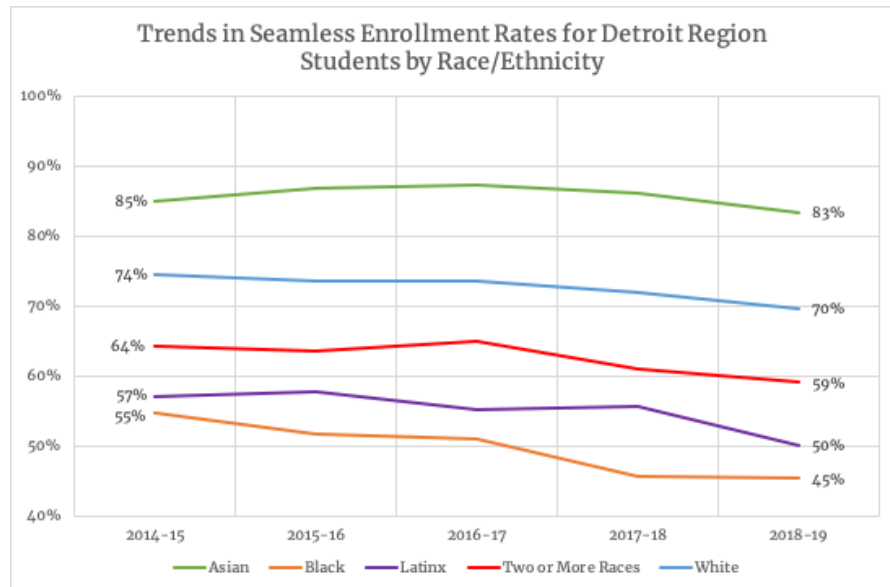
Recognizing these 17 strategies will not be achieved overnight, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council has set priorities for the immediate, short-term, and long-term time periods. These priorities were set based on relative urgency and efficiency of implementation, versus those strategies that are more holistic in nature and therefore take longer to yield results. While the designations indicate milestones for implementation, many of these strategies will require planning in advance of these target dates, which the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will be factoring into its work as it moves to actualize these strategies. These priorities are summarized in the visual below and described in more detail in the next four sections.



## Improving Postsecondary Access

**Challenge 1: Direct from high school postsecondary enrollment rates in the region are declining, especially among Black and Latinx students.**

The rate at which students in the Detroit region enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months of graduation has decreased slightly over the last four years. While college enrollments are declining overall, Black and Latinx students have experienced the highest percentage point drop of any other race/ethnicity.<sup>12</sup> This trend is likely to be exacerbated as a result of COVID-19. While polls



vary in their predictions, all indicate that a substantial number of students have already cancelled or expect to alter their postsecondary plans.

Troublingly, every year, there is a sizable pool of high school graduates, especially Black students, who have done the hard work to become college-ready yet don't make it to college. **In fact, 23% of 2016 Detroit Public Schools Community District graduates who tested college-ready or near college-ready have never enrolled in college.**<sup>13</sup> This suggests significant barriers exist on the path to college beyond academic preparation. High schools throughout the region need to provide increased supports and develop college-going cultures so that immediately enrolling into postsecondary education is the default pathway for students – especially those students who are already demonstrating readiness for college through successfully completing coursework and their scores on assessments. **To meet our targets for direct from high school enrollment, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council recognizes that community-wide efforts are necessary to ensure students in all 275 public high schools in the region receive adequate advising and post-graduation support to enroll in college directly after high school.**

<sup>12</sup> The data for the visual on page 18 is sourced from MI School Data and is an average of trends over time for Oakland Schools, Macomb ISD, and Wayne RESA.

<sup>13</sup> From the "Detroit Higher Education Profile," Youth Policy Lab, 2019.

Strategy 1.1: Dramatically increase college and career advising beginning in 9th grade.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Detroit College Access Network
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Intermediate School Districts
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term
<p>Embedded college advising and career exploration activities early in high school make a measurable difference in the success rate of low-income and first-generation students, especially when college partners support schools in delivering advising services. Advising during critical leverage points in the high school experience can increase student participation in college preparatory activities, strengthen student navigation of the complex college application and financial aid processes, and improve college selection and match. <b>Examples like Indiana’s 21st Century Scholars Success Program – which provides pre-college service/preparation, financial aid, and targeted academic/social supports as early as 9th grade – has made a measurable difference in improving the success rate of low-income and first-generation students.</b> These scholars have the highest college-going rate of any demographic group in the state of Indiana and exceed their low-income peers in placement into gateway courses, completion of coursework, and persistence to a second year.</p> <p>A number of nonprofit organizations serving the city of Detroit have increased the reach of college advising to dozens of Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) and charter high schools and thousands of students, including the Chamber’s “Race to the FAFSA Line” completion drive, Detroit College Access Network (DCAN)'s Get Schooled interactive city-wide advising, DCAN's 11 College Bound grant schools working to ensure every student has a college and career plan, and coaches provided to students receiving the Detroit Promise. The University of Michigan College Advising Corps (MCAC), Michigan State University College Advising Corps (MSUCAC) and Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)'s AdviseMI additionally work with high schools throughout the region.</p>	

Challenges remain in deepening this work within targeted schools and to address gaps in the extent to which these services are available in high schools across Wayne County and the rest of the region. **The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is encouraging all public high schools to expand college and career exploration and advising activities across all four years of high school, with 50-100 of the region's schools supported by deeper community, college and business partnerships.** A workgroup comprised of DCAN, ISDs, school counselors, and key district administrators should develop a regional framework, much like Indiana's 21st Century Scholars programming or Delaware's Delaware Goes to College guide, that delineates college & career exploration and advising activities for each high school grade. This roadmap should be widely promoted in high schools throughout the region through trainings for high school administrators and counselors, peer learning communities, and challenge grants to schools for implementing expanded advising services. These schools, selected based on opportunities to improve college going rates particularly among Black and Latinx students, should consider replicating national models, such as:

- **Career & College Centers** - supported by Achieve Minneapolis, these in-school centers staffed by school counselors, teachers, and social workers are central hubs to provide students with hands-on support in postsecondary and career pathway planning. Students receive postsecondary application advice, career counseling, and FAFSA and financial aid assistance on-site in their school.
- **College & Career Coaches** - employees of local colleges in the Virginia Community College System are embedded in targeted high schools to work directly with students, administer college placement assessments, support students in college and career planning, facilitate dual enrollment opportunities, and organize workshops and business partnerships.

Public universities and colleges in the region can further contribute to creating college-going cultures by launching a **Direct Admissions** college application model. Similar to an approach implemented in Idaho, every high school senior in the region who is on track to graduate would automatically be mailed a college acceptance letter in the fall. Different letters (e.g. community college only, less selective public universities, more selective, etc.) could be sent to students at different GPA/SAT/PSAT combination levels. These letters would indicate that they have been accepted to state institutions, provide information on financial aid, and point them to a Next Steps website to complete admissions applications at the universities or colleges aligned with their interests.

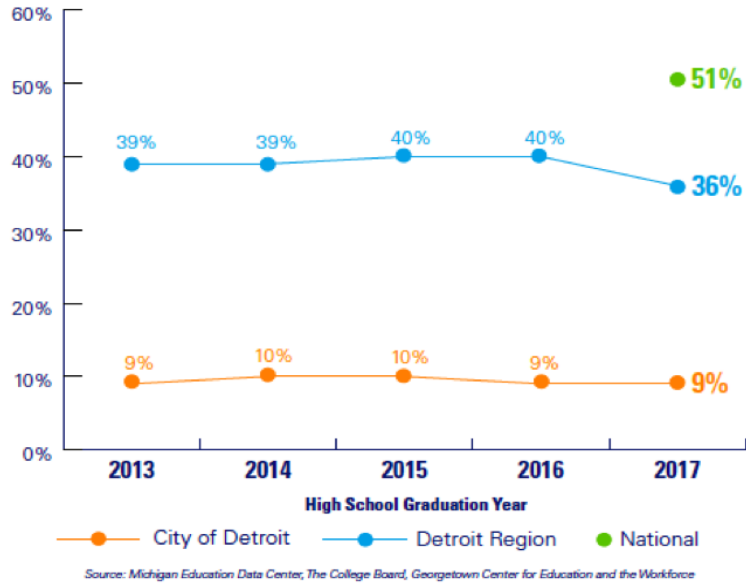
Strategy 1.2: Develop a regional effort to combat summer melt.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit College Access Network; Intermediate School Districts; Michigan College Access Network; Community-Based Organizations
<b>Priority:</b>	Immediate
<p>National research shows that between high school graduation and the start of fall classes, 10-40% of recent high school graduates who intend to enroll in college do not show up.<sup>14</sup> <b>This phenomenon, called “summer melt,” has a disproportionate effect on low-income students and students of color, especially if they are community college-bound.</b></p> <p>In 2019, DCAN piloted a program to address this challenge in Detroit, reaching 350 students through a drop-in center for college admissions and financial aid assistance, partnerships with community-based organizations for marketing and mobile workshops, and follow up texts and emails with contacts. And in 2020, to address disparities due to COVID-19, DCAN and MCAN doubled-down on this strategy to launch virtual college advising office hours and address students' loss of in-person support from counselors and teachers.</p> <p><b>The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council calls on partners to collaborate and expand these post-graduation support programs across the region, serving students in 75-125 of the region's 275 public high schools and through direct messaging touch-points to half (15,000) of each year's graduating class.</b> The effort should dramatically expand the number of students provided high-touch transition services by community-based organizations, colleges, and universities the summer after high school graduation, building on early successes in the city of Detroit.</p> <p><b>Research suggests personalized text messages to recent high school graduates offering deadline reminders, links to documents and resources, and connections to professional advisers can substantially increase college enrollment, especially among populations traditionally underrepresented in higher education.</b><sup>15</sup> Successful efforts to combat summer melt in Detroit and elsewhere include a combination of automated messaging to targeted students, along with peer mentoring, summer employment of school counselors, intensive coaching, and financial planning assistance for a subset of students. Providing students with one-on-one coaching and support will require enlisting college advising corps members, trained volunteer mentors, financial aid advisors, and summer employment for selected school counselors. The region also should expand summer internships, academic opportunities, and bridge programs that include early access to college courses and boot camps on student success skills, college writing skills, and mathematics refreshers.</p>	

<sup>14</sup>From “Summer Melt Tools,” The Strategic Data Project at the Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> From “The not-so-lazy days of summer: experimental interventions to increase college entry among low-income high school graduates,” Ben Castleman and Lindsay Page, 2013, *New Directions for Youth Development* 2013(110), 77-97.

**Challenge #2: Not all students in the Detroit region are ready for the academic rigors of college.**

High schools in the region leave far too many students unprepared for the rigors of college. Recent analyses show that the number of high school students considered college-ready based on college admissions tests (ACT/SAT) peaked at 40% in 2016 and has declined in recent years.<sup>16</sup> This puts the region well below the national average of 51%.<sup>17</sup> Workgroup participants and survey respondents corroborated this finding, emphasizing that there are large disparities in curricular offerings between high schools across the region. Unfortunately, preparation gaps



are often the single biggest hurdle to college and long-term economic success. Research indicates that nationally only about 1 in 10 students who enroll in remedial courses in community college ever attain a credential. Part of the solution relates to policies at colleges and universities and is addressed in the next strategy. More needs to be done while these students are still enrolled in high school to ensure they are ready to succeed in credit-bearing coursework.

Addressing the college readiness of students in Detroit is of high priority to regional stakeholders. As one survey respondent said, “Many students are mired in remedial classes that are a barrier to advancement. Costs continue to spiral upwards and debt is a problem, which chills ability of students to take risks, start businesses etc.” High schools and colleges throughout the region need to commit to structural and curricular reforms to prepare all students for postsecondary education. **To reach the necessary targets for college readiness, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council recognizes that greater alignment is needed between high school curriculum and college readiness expectations of local higher education institutions.**

<sup>16</sup> Data from the graph on this page is sourced from the Detroit Regional Chamber’s State of Education Report.

<sup>17</sup> Michigan is one of only about 25 states in the country that requires all students to take the SAT/ACT.



**Strategy 2.1: Implement postsecondary transition courses across the region.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Intermediate School Districts; School Districts
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-Term

Of the 2017 public high school graduates who immediately enrolled in college across the Detroit metropolitan region, 26% entered into the developmental pipeline, slowing down their likelihood of persisting and succeeding in higher education. Remediation rates are significantly higher at some high schools. This is, in part, a result of the decentralized nature of the region's public schools, which has limited the region's capacity to systematically align the default high school curriculum with the college readiness expectations of local higher education institutions.

In a number of states and communities across the country, K-12 educators and higher education faculty have come together to co-develop a 12th grade transition course that can be offered to any student identified as not yet college-ready on the state's 11th grade assessment. Taking advantage of the 12th grade year to help students catch up on knowledge and skills they have not yet mastered has led to increases in enrollment and success in a number of states and communities. For example, in just five years, the Tennessee Seamless Alignment and Integrated Support (SAILS) program expanded from one high school to serve over 50,000 students statewide, with a 92% course passage rate. Over that same time period, Tennessee's mathematics remediation rate decreased by 15 percentage points and its college enrollment rate increased by over five percentage points. Perhaps equally as important, SAILS demonstrably improved students' perceptions of the usefulness and enjoyability of mathematics.

**Given this evidence, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will coordinate a regional effort to develop and support postsecondary academic transition courses for students who, in 10th or 11th grade, are identified as at-risk for being placed into remedial mathematics or English in college.** To develop the courses, higher education leaders on the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will recruit faculty from at least two regional universities and two community colleges to collaborate with high school teachers to draft curriculum and pilot the transition courses in at least 10 high schools representing a variety of communities and school types. The Council may look to state entities, such as MCAN, for additional support as they seek to pilot similar efforts with community college and district partners across the state.

**In addition to developing the course, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council requests that all colleges and universities in the region commit to enrolling successful completers of the pilot courses with a grade of C or higher directly into credit-bearing college coursework after matriculation without further placement tests.** Future expansion to additional schools and classrooms should be done based on formative evaluations to improve student outcomes and teacher training in course delivery. To scale up implementation such that every high school offers a transition course in both



English and mathematics, the tri-county Intermediate School Districts and other regional education organizations should partner with faculty from regional colleges and universities to conduct outreach to individual schools and provide ongoing teacher training.

**Strategy 2.2: Expand early postsecondary options so all students equitably participate without sacrificing quality.**

<b>Lead:</b>	School Districts
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Postsecondary Institutions; Intermediate School Districts; Philanthropic Partners
<b>Priority:</b>	Long-Term

Students who earn postsecondary credit in high school are more likely to enroll in higher education, persist, and complete in a timely fashion. Yet participation rates in these opportunities are notably low in the Detroit region. While there are exceptions, including Henry Ford College’s Early College Schools, some high schools across the Detroit metropolitan area have fewer than 5% of 11th and 12th grade students enrolling in and passing advanced coursework opportunities. **Data also shows significant inequities in participation. In 2015-16, white students in Michigan took Advanced Placement classes at more than twice the rate of their Black peers and were 80% more likely to take dual enrollment classes.**

The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council commends the State of Michigan for providing dual enrollment courses to public high school students for free and for covering the cost of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations for low-income students. However, barriers remain to developing high-quality dual enrollment programs. The result is mixed levels of access and quality among early postsecondary opportunities.

The City of Memphis expanded access to dual enrollment citywide, after realizing these opportunities existed at only a few Middle Colleges and high-performing high schools. The district increased the number of postsecondary institutions offering dual enrollment courses in the district from two to six and made courses available in nearly all high schools in the district, including all eight high schools identified for intervention by the State of Tennessee due to persistent low performance. With support from the American Electric Power Foundation, cities such as Columbus, Laredo, and Tulsa have expanded STEM dual enrollment participation through teacher training, middle school STEM experiences, early college assessments, summer academic supports, and pathways for students to earn 12 college credits.

Dallas Intermediate School District is another community example. **The district leads the nation in the number of mathematics and science AP qualifying scores earned by Black and Latinx students per 1,000 Black and Latinx juniors and seniors; a minority student in Dallas is more than twice as likely to earn a qualifying score on an AP math or science exam than in any other large urban school district in the country.** Their success is in part the result of foundations and businesses providing targeted funding for teacher training, equipment and supplies, and awards to students and teachers for success. Based on the success of the model in Dallas, the National Math and Science Initiative's College Readiness Program has expanded to 1,300 schools nationwide thanks to funding from Exxon-Mobile and others.

**To address the widely-varying levels of access and quality among early postsecondary opportunities, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council recommends a community-wide effort to enlist the resources of foundations, postsecondary institutions, and businesses to drive their expansion in public high schools across the region.** Replicating successful whole-school and cohort models, such as Henry Ford College's Early College Schools and quality career academies, should occur throughout the region. A concerted effort is necessary both within and across schools to address racial and ethnic gaps in participation. Districts should adopt academic acceleration policies that automatically place students who meet GPA and assessment benchmarks into the next most rigorous course in the subject. Schools in Tacoma, Washington and Chicago, Illinois have seen a dramatic rise in enrollment and success by students of color in dual enrollment and Advanced Placement courses. The State of Washington recently required all districts in the state to implement such policies.

**The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council also encourages all postsecondary institutions in the region, including community colleges and public and private universities, to invest in enhancing the delivery and quality of their dual enrollment courses.** Districts and ISDs should support individual schools in developing dual enrollment and Advanced Placement expansion efforts; leveraging funding to provide high-need schools with teacher training, equipment, and supplies; navigating complex partnerships on behalf of individual schools; and providing awards to students, teachers, and schools for success.

## Boosting Postsecondary Success

**Challenge #3: Current remediation models and placement policies are limiting the number of students succeeding in gateway mathematics and English.**

One of the most significant challenges the region must overcome to achieve 60% percent attainment are gateway course placement policies that curtail students' aspirations. Of the 2017 Detroit-area public high school graduates who immediately enrolled in college, 26% entered into the developmental pipeline.<sup>18</sup> **This is particularly prevalent among Black and Latinx college students. Nationally, Black and Latinx community college students are 17 and 6 percentage points more likely to end up in remedial math and 23 and 15 percentage points more likely to end up in remedial English than their White peers.**<sup>19</sup> Significantly, few students who end up in remedial education ever enroll in, let alone complete, gateway courses in mathematics and English, and only a fraction go on to graduate. Further research reveals that many students placed in remedial coursework—nearly 50%—could pass a college-level course if given the chance.

Recognizing this, many institutions across the nation, including many in the Detroit region, have accelerated student placement into credit-bearing gateway courses through two key strategies: 1) corequisite approaches to developmental education, where students are simultaneously enrolled in a credit-bearing course and parallel supports designed to help students succeed in the credit-bearing course and 2) multiple measures of placement to go beyond high-stakes tests as an assessment of readiness for college-level courses. Michigan's Student Success Center has demonstrated the effectiveness of both strategies. For instance, about 70% of Michiganders who took a corequisite-like course passed a gateway course in mathematics or English, compared to just 21% of peers who took traditional remedial courses.<sup>20</sup>

While many colleges in the Detroit region have begun to implement these strategies, few have achieved scale in both mathematics and English. As survey commenters noted, many student success strategies, including corequisite remediation and multiple measures, are works-in-progress, with movement in the right direction. However, those surveyed stressed, in most cases, there is a need to scale up and improve fidelity of implementation. **The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is urging all colleges and universities in the region to respond aggressively to address this issue and help put students on the path toward a credential.**

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<sup>18</sup> From the "State of Education Report," Detroit Regional Chamber, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> From "Corequisite Support," Complete College America, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> From "The Accelerated Learning Program in Michigan," Michigan Community College Association, 2016.

**Strategy 3.1: Expand use of multiple measures to place students directly in credit-bearing mathematics and English courses.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council
<b>Priority:</b>	Immediate

Regional colleges and universities need to significantly reduce their reliance on placement tests as a means of identifying student readiness for credit-bearing mathematics and English. Rather than solely relying on placement tests, local institutions should prioritize high school grade point average, in addition to other metrics, to assess student readiness for college-level courses. In fact, when compared to scores on the placement exam, Michigan Merit Exam, and the ACT portion of the Michigan Merit Exam, high school GPA has been shown to be the best single predictor of success in Intermediate Algebra, College Algebra and College Composition at Michigan colleges.<sup>21</sup> Already, many institutions in the region are moving in this direction, in part, due to disruptions in college admissions and placement testing caused by COVID-19.

**The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is encouraging all two-year and four-year institutions in the Compact to commit in their institutional action plans to significantly expanding the use of multiple measures for placement in gateway coursework.** Together, through this expansion and other strategies identified in this plan, the Council aims to reduce the number of students placed into remedial coursework by 80%, impacting over 7,000 students in the region who may otherwise get caught in the remedial education trap.

The most common use of multiple indicators combines GPA, which is the most accurate predictor of success, standardized assessments, and high school coursework. Other measures institutions in the region could consider include high school English and mathematics grades, high school or institutional assessments, diagnostics exams, non-cognitive factors, previous college courses, work experience, and student self-placement. Leaders should convene groups of faculty to identify appropriate thresholds for these measures, particularly GPA and high school coursework.

**To support these efforts, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will recruit a working group from willing colleges and universities in the region to develop common agreements on multiple measures and pilot them at participating institutions.** From this pilot, there should be consideration to developing a plan to scale to all postsecondary institutions in the region. Detroit Drives Degrees will also engage leaders at all institutions to disseminate findings, report on progress, review research, and share best practices.

<sup>21</sup>From "Using Multiple Measures for Placement in College Composition," Michigan Community College Association, 2016; and from "Using Multiple Measures for Placement in Mathematics," Michigan Community College Association, 2016

**As with other strategies identified in this plan, colleges that demonstrate significant improvement on key performance indicators, like gateway course placement, will be eligible to receive a regional award for progress.** For postsecondary institutions, a particular weight will be placed on this indicator recognizing the significant barrier it presents for low-income students and students of color.

Strategy 3.2: Scale up implementation of corequisite models of remediation in both mathematics and English.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term
<p>Although college readiness begins with rigorous expectations and quality instruction at the secondary level, and effective placement policies at the postsecondary level, some provisions must be made for students who enter college needing support to succeed in gateway courses. Offering just-in-time instruction and supports concurrent to gateway courses through corequisite models is one way to get many more students successfully into and through credit-bearing gateway courses right away. States and institutions that have scalably implemented corequisite strategies have seen double-digit percentage increases in students passing the gateway course over traditional pre-requisite remedial approaches. Evidence from both the Detroit Drives Degrees survey and reports from the Michigan Community College Association indicate that corequisite models for English courses are increasingly being adopted at most community colleges in the region but that mathematics courses are still largely a work in progress.</p> <p>To measurably impact completion rates and dramatically reduce remedial course placement, corequisite and other accelerated instructional reforms must be scaled to serve all students at the two-year and four-year level in both English and mathematics. <b>All higher education institutions in the Compact should commit to doing so and immediately convene campus faculty, deans, and other stakeholders to redesign developmental education and gateway courses.</b></p> <p>Most colleges and universities in the region are piloting one of three research-based accelerated models of remediation in some sections: corequisite, compressed, and modularized. While corequisite forms of remediation are the most recognized, accelerated options are also quite effective. Community college systems in North Carolina and Virginia have been implementing this approach for over five years. They broke semester-long courses—typically three to five credits—into four-week modules that count for one credit apiece. “Fractions and decimals” and “Rational expressions and equations” are each one module, for instance. North Carolina offers eight modules and Virginia has nine. According to research from the Community College Research Center, these courses work best for students who just need a brush-up</p>	

on particular skills.<sup>22</sup> Colleges in the Detroit region should be attentive to match students to the right delivery format for remediation.

**The Detroit Drives Degrees Student Success Working Group is committed to helping expand implementation of corequisite acceleration strategies across the region's campuses.** Detroit Drives Degrees intends to solicit support for campus improvement initiatives from in-state and national experts, such as Complete College America, the Michigan Center for Student Success, and the Education Commission of the States.

**As with other strategies identified in this plan, colleges that demonstrate significant improvement on key performance indicators, like gateway course placement, will be eligible to receive a regional award for progress.** For postsecondary institutions, a particular weight will be placed on this indicator recognizing the significant barrier it presents for low-income students and students of color.

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<sup>22</sup> From "Modularization in Developmental Mathematics in Two States," Susan Bickerstaff, Maggie P. Fay, and Medeline Joy Trimble, 2016, *Community College Research Center*.

**Challenge #4: Interventions that demonstrably improve student progression and persistence have been difficult to scale.**

The region's most significant threat to achieving 60% by 2030 is the high number of students who fail to make significant progress toward a degree within one year of enrolling. According to the Chamber's State of Education report, among regional high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions, only 21% of two-year students and 77% of four-year students successfully completed their first year of coursework (24 credits). It's important to note that a significant number of students who attend college in the region, especially those who attend community colleges, go to school part-time. Nonetheless, since 2013, while accumulation at four-year institutions has increased steadily, rates for credit accumulation at two-year institutions have trended downward.

These trends are likely having an adverse effect on the number of students in the region who complete a credential. According to MI School Data, after one year, over 10% of high school graduates from the Detroit region have stopped out of college. By year five, over 30% of those students have dropped out of college altogether and less than 40% have completed a credential. National research indicates students are more likely to persist and complete degrees if they start full-time, complete at least one semester full-time, and/or maintain continuous enrollment in college. In fact, when compared to students who take 12-14 credits per semester, students who take 15 credits at two-year institutions are more likely to complete all 15 credits (58% vs. 54%) and are more likely to do so with a higher GPA (2.8 vs. 2.36).<sup>23</sup> Similar trends are observed at the four-year level.

While increasing credit load is important, proactive college and career advising must be deployed in order to support students along their paths. The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is proud of the efforts underway through Detroit Promise Path, which provides intrusive coaching with incentives for students to attend advising meetings. Preliminary results from a study by MDRC show the program has positive effects on credit accumulation and persistence. However, only the five community colleges in the Compact are offering this program: Henry Ford College, Macomb Community College, Oakland Community College, Schoolcraft College, and the Wayne County Community College District. And, importantly, the program only reaches 535 students – a small fraction of those enrolled in postsecondary programs in the region. Survey respondents confirmed that while intrusive advising programs like Detroit Promise Path are effective, they have not been sufficiently scaled to serve the many students who need these services. **In order to dramatically improve student progression in college, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is committed to working with local institutions to better incentivize, support, and scale high-impact strategies that get Detroit students across the finish line.**

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<sup>23</sup> From "#15ToFinish Materials Now Available," Complete College America, 2018.

Strategy 4.1: Incentivize full- and part-time students to maximize the credits they complete each year.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council; Detroit Promise
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term
<p>To keep students on track to graduate, <b>all postsecondary institutions in the Compact should commit to adjusting institutional policies and/or practices to encourage maximization of student credit load.</b> We recommend institutions nudge full-time students to enroll in 15 credits each semester (or 30 credits per year, including summers) and part-time students to maintain continuous enrollment and maximize their credit load as much as possible (ideally, at least 15 credits per year, including summers). Institutions should also be vigilant about promoting on-time graduation and ensuring students do not take credits for the sake of taking credits. One option would be for institutions to conduct program reviews and set a credit-hour requirement cap (as allowed by accreditation standards) to 60 for an associate degree and 120 for a bachelor’s degree. Institutions should also, if they haven’t already through Guided Pathways, create academic degree maps that show a term-by-term listing of courses required for on-time graduation. Research from Hawaii found encouraging students to complete more credits on an annual basis not only increased completion and reduced time to degree but also had a positive effect upon student grade point average.</p> <p>At a minimum, institutions in the region should clearly emphasize credit maximization practices in current academic advising structures. To increase awareness, institutions could implement a comprehensive campus informational marketing campaign to increase awareness among advisors. Likewise, new student orientation is an optimal time to convey the importance of credit maximization to students and/or parents. Many resources for advisors and administrators, including how to discuss credit load with students, are available through national organizations, including Complete College America and Achieving the Dream. Similar practices should be deployed with Detroit Promise students.</p> <p>To continually incentivize this at the regional level, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council <b>will annually measure and report on credit maximization indicators and monitor policies at all higher education institutions in the region.</b> Importantly, this will mean making adjustments to the current measure for student progression, which is capped at 24 credits rather than the nationally-recognized 30 credits. It also means setting indicators for part-time students, for whom 30 credits may be unrealistic, which may include continuous enrollment and/or percent of students who complete at least one semester full-time.</p>	



**Strategy 4.2: Build institutional capacity to provide intrusive advising that uses predictive analytics and technology.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Philanthropic Leaders
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term

Excellent progress has been made by the region’s community colleges to implement guided pathways reforms that integrate academic and career advising and improve the first-year experience. In addition, regional programs like Detroit Promise Path and Midnight Golf have had a demonstrated impact on student progression and completion. Yet while almost all stakeholders interviewed as a part of the strategic planning expressed agreement that intrusive advising is a highly effective strategy for completion, many noted the challenges with advising capacity and scale.

Once institutions have done the hard work of identifying degree paths and course sequencing, technology can be an effective tool when looking to increase capacity for advising. In particular, predictive analytics that track student academic behavior, send automated alerts and notifications, and enable advisors to provide more effective, targeted interventions, have been shown to increase student retention and persistence. Wayne State University's investment in technology and additional academic advisors has contributed to significant retention increases and a 20% increase in its graduation rate. **One of the important features of Wayne State’s early alert system is it is targeted directly at students of color in order to address the Black-white completion gap. The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is encouraging all higher education institutions in the Compact to commit to implementing some kind of early alert system, targeted at low-income students and students of color, within the next two or three years.**

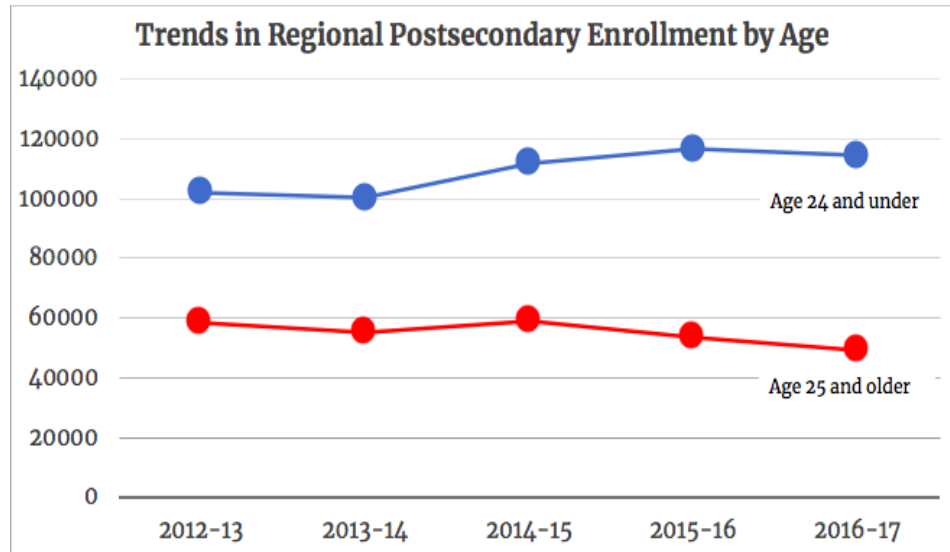
While technology can be useful to accelerate good work, it is ineffective without competent advisors to leverage and take action on what the data show. At Mercy College in New York, early alert systems are complemented by standardized early alert interventions, called “intervention pathways,” to improve student outcomes and optimize staff time. Each pathway has clear next steps to ensure a timely and coordinated response from advisors.

While standardized approaches can optimize staff time, reaching the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council’s 72% target for student progress will require additional capacity at regional institutions. As one workgroup participant put it, truly effective advising is all about “relationships, relationships, relationships.” As such, **Detroit Drives Degrees is committed to working with its philanthropic partners to support those institutions who take the leap to invest in predictive analytics.** The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is encouraging funders to invest in up-front costs of building staff capacity to provide intrusive advising and leverage predictive analytics technology, with recognition that long-term sustainability is feasible as retention rates increase.

## Advancing Adult Attainment

**Challenge #5: Despite clear economic benefits, postsecondary enrollment rates for adults age 25 and older have remained stagnant in recent years.**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are nearly 1 million adults in the three-county Detroit region with a high school equivalency or less. Despite the clear economic imperative for adults to obtain postsecondary credentials, college enrollments for those age 25 and older are low and have remained stagnant in



recent years. More specifically, in 2017, only 49,000 – about 5% of the total non-credentialed population in the region – were enrolled in one of the area’s nine public postsecondary institutions.<sup>24</sup> With many adults displaced as a result of the pandemic, the economic imperative for adults to enroll in and complete higher education is more urgent than ever.

While adult learners face many barriers to postsecondary enrollment, one that is cited most often is financial considerations. In fact, adult learners indicate finding ways to pay for postsecondary education is among their top concerns before pursuing a degree or credential, according to a recent report from Public Agenda.<sup>25</sup> Adult learners face a number of unique challenges when it comes to financing their education. For example, there is limited access to Federal Title IV aid beyond loans for students with independent status on their financial aid application. Beyond access to funds, as many as two-thirds of prospective adult students worry about taking on debt to pursue a postsecondary credential.<sup>26</sup> And many adult stop-outs are often unable to complete their degrees because of financial holds on their institutional accounts. **To reach the region’s targets for adult enrollment, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is committed to working with philanthropic partners, local businesses and postsecondary institutions to locate adult learners and create adequate incentives to encourage them to enroll in postsecondary education.**

<sup>24</sup> Data for the graph on page 34 is sourced from MI School Data on 9 public institutions in the region: Schoolcraft College, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Oakland University, Wayne State University, Oakland Community College, Henry Ford College, Macomb Community College, Wayne County Community College, and St. Clair County Community College. Publicly available data on adult enrollment was not available for the two private institutions.

<sup>25</sup> From “A Major Step: What Adults Without Degrees Say About Going (Back) to College,” Public Agenda, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Strategy 5.1: Establish a regional scholarship program for adult learners.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Postsecondary institutions; Philanthropic Leaders; Employers
<b>Priority:</b>	Immediate
<p>Nationally, it is evident clear signaling of ways to pay for college for adult learners can reduce barriers to access. When Tennessee implemented its Tennessee Reconnect program, which offers scholarships for adult learners, it received nearly 400% more applications for the grant than expected. Indiana's "Work Ready Grants," a similar program designed to incentivize high-quality non-degree credential attainment among adults, also led to astonishing gains in just three years, with 10,000 individuals across the state using this program to earn in-demand certificates.</p> <p><b>Recognizing that removing postsecondary financial burdens can tip the scale in favor of returning to attain credentials, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is encouraging philanthropic, education and business leaders to collaborate and create promise-type aid programs geared toward non-traditional, adult students.</b> Similar to Detroit Promise, this scholarship will cover the cost of tuition and fees, but for eligible adults throughout the entire Metro Detroit area. The region will explore public funding sources for the scholarships, but given the current local and state budgets, will work with Detroit Drives Degrees philanthropic partners to identify ways to incentivize or catalyze scholarship programs using an institutional match grant or other strategies to augment possible state dollars through Michigan Reconnect.</p> <p><b>Detroit Drives Degrees will work with local leaders to tailor the scholarship to the region's needs.</b> There are two options for executing on this. First, consider targeting financial assistance to any adult seeking to attain a region-approved credential of value. For reference, Indiana's "Workforce Ready Grant" offers targeted financial assistance for any adult seeking to attain a state-approved postsecondary certificate in a high-demand field from the state's two-year colleges. This ensures the state is only funding completion of credentials with demonstrated labor market value. Alternatively, the region could provide a "last dollar" scholarship to any adult seeking to enroll at a specific set of institutions. Comparatively, the "Tennessee Reconnect Grant" provides a "last dollar" scholarship that pays the remaining balance after other state and Pell Grants have been applied. The grant is available to any resident who wants to pursue associate degrees, technical degrees, or technical diplomas at a Tennessee community college or technical college.</p> <p><b>The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will also work with Detroit Drives Degrees staff to locate and communicate with working adults who do not have a postsecondary credential.</b> Detroit Drives Degrees has already laid the groundwork for a large-scale marketing campaign geared toward adult learners. The initiative should continue this momentum and develop messaging around affordability of college and available scholarships. The communications will (1) outline the importance of a certificate</p>	

or degree for future employment opportunities with a particular emphasis on COVID-19, (2) provide clear steps for how adults can engage at any of the public institutions, and (3) identify the services and program offerings available to help them earn postsecondary credit while maintaining their employment. Detroit Drives Degrees will seek out public and private partnerships to make engagement with adult learners a top priority.

**Strategy 5.2: Expand debt-forgiveness programs region-wide, including reciprocity across institutions.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees
<b>Priority:</b>	Immediate

Colleges typically withhold students’ transcripts if students or former students owe a debt to the institution. For many adults, educational aspirations can be put in jeopardy by a small bill owed to a college or university. Sometimes that’s an unpaid library or parking fine, or a college may hold a student liable for federal financial aid funds, including grants, if they withdraw at the wrong time. These students are caught in a vicious cycle. If students are unable to afford to pay off the debt to their school and secure their transcript, they cannot and will not continue their education to increase their earning potential.

Detroit has been a national pioneer of innovative debt-forgiveness programs. Wayne State University’s Warrior Way Back forgives a portion of a student’s outstanding debt to the institution as they re-enroll and earn credits toward completion. The revenue generated from students re-enrolling and staying enrolled has resulted in a net gain of \$200,000 for the university in the first seven months of the program. **As a result of these pioneering efforts, and others at Oakland University and Henry Ford College, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will work with each institution in the region to take on a debt-forgiveness initiative and make it a hallmark of the region’s attainment efforts.** To support these efforts, Detroit Drives Degrees will leverage its adult attainment working group to share lessons learned from Wayne State University and others, in order to inform implementation at other institutions.

**In addition, the institutions currently implementing debt-forgiveness efforts should consider reciprocity with other institutions as research from Strada Education Network indicates stop-outs do not always want to return to the same institution they attended previously.** By piloting reciprocity, institutions could determine where they might experience gains, losses, or balances. The Northeast Indiana Colleges and Universities network took this approach by creating a cross-institutional program that will allow the transfer of transcripts, student data, and information to enable stop-outs of one institution to complete at another partner institution.

Strategy 5.3: Increase the number of employers providing upskilling incentives to their employees.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Regional employers
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council; Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Priority:</b>	Long-term
<p>Employer engagement is key to getting more adults in the Detroit region to and through college with a high-quality credential. A report released in fall 2019 from Strada Education Network shows almost half of American adults without degrees believe they need additional education to advance in their careers, and they are most likely to look to employers for that training. <b>These findings are especially acute among younger, non-white, and urban residents, who feel a greater need than their peers.</b><sup>27</sup></p> <p>Incentives for employees to return to college can provide significant benefits to both employers and employees. Studies show that those who participate in educational reimbursement programs (ERP) are more likely to stay at the company, receive promotions, and earn higher salaries than colleagues that did not participate. A Lumina Foundation study of Cigna’s ERP revealed that entry-level and mid-management ERP participants received, on average, a 43% incremental wage increase over the three-year period as compared to non-ERP participants. Further, from 2012 to 2014, ERP resulted in a 129% return on investment for the employer as a result of avoided talent management costs. Another study of community college students who accessed Section 127 benefits, a tax-exempt tuition assistance benefit allowing employers to give employees up to \$5,250 a year, suggest those who receive assistance have better retention and attainment outcomes than a comparable group.</p> <p>While tuition reimbursement can be helpful for students, there is evidence tuition disbursement programs – where employers pay up front for an employee’s education – are more effective, especially for students who are low-income and of color. Establishing a third-party billing process to allow the employer to pay the college directly provides more opportunities for students who cannot fund their education in advance. Likewise, not all incentives have to be monetary. For example, the HIRE Education Forum in the greater Louisville, Kentucky region found success partnering with businesses to identify potential incentives for employees, including tuition assistance, bonus for completion of certificate or degree, ability to work flexible hours, and opportunities to earn additional work responsibilities.</p> <p>Momentum already exists among employers in the region to expand tuition assistance programs. The region can and should harness this momentum and spur further employer support and participation through a regional recognition program or seal for programs that excel. <b>As such, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is planning to work with local businesses to develop incentives for their non-credential adult workers to return to higher education.</b></p>	

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.stradaeducation.org/report/back-to-school/>

### **Challenge #6: Postsecondary programs and services are not always designed with the adult learner in mind.**

To reach 60% attainment, Detroit must substantially open doors for adult learners to return to or engage for the first time with the postsecondary system. But access alone is not enough. According to a survey from the Education Advisory Board, the top factors influencing adults' decision to enroll in postsecondary education included the total length of time required to complete a degree; the option for flexible, weekend or part-time scheduling; and the availability of online or hybrid programs. Therefore, for the nearly 1 million adults in Detroit with no college credential of any kind, higher education will need to adapt its scheduling, supports, and alignment with the region's economic needs to deliver an experience that is both welcoming and beneficial to their long-term success.

The coronavirus pandemic has created more urgency for these changes. According to the Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan, as of late May, Michigan's insured unemployment rate stood at a daunting 23%. The workers bearing the brunt of this initial shock are the very people least equipped to weather it, with less-educated people losing work at three times the rate of those with college degrees.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, in the Detroit metro area, the Black-white gap in loss of employment income is 38 percentage points, with a shocking 85% of Black adults having experienced such a loss. These individuals will need flexible and adaptable education and training options to gain skills quickly and return to and advance in the labor market.

While Detroit institutions need to be ready to serve these learners, only 3% of survey respondents strongly agreed that delivery of coursework and programs were designed with adult learners in mind. **To meet the targets for adult completion, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is planning to double down on current strategies being implemented through the Chamber's Detroit Reconnect program and work directly with regional partners to adapt college programming to better meet the needs of adult learners.**

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<sup>28</sup> From "Accelerate Recovery: Keep the Attainment Agenda Front & Center," Annie Phillips, 2020, *Education Strategy Group*.

**Strategy 6.1: Double down on the number and quality of community-linked adult student navigators in the region.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Postsecondary Institutions; Philanthropic Partners
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term

Adult navigators are non-academic advisors who support adult students during every step of their postsecondary education, from filling out their applications to completing their courses of study and transitioning to the labor market. They have been specifically trained to be the single point of contact on adult students’ distinct needs, such as childcare and transportation assistance, and are available at times adult students are on campus. As part of their Tennessee Reconnect initiative, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has leveraged adult navigators who help connect students to institution-neutral college navigation services, career exploration tools, and assistance with understanding financial aid and college costs.

This type of support can result in significant attainment gains for adult students. In Mississippi, 26% of students who saw a “navigator,” including those with just a high school diploma, earned a postsecondary credential compared to just 18% of peer students. Presently, Detroit Drives Degrees’ Detroit Reconnect program leverages the navigator model to help guide adult learners to and through postsecondary. **In the years ahead, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will double down on this strategy both in terms of numbers and quality.**

For those navigators currently in place, Detroit Drives Degrees will ensure they are used as adult students’ single point of contact. Findings from the workgroups indicate not all schools in the region have adopted the suggested “concierge model.” In both Mississippi and Tennessee, the navigator acts as a consistent point of contact for adult students, which makes for less effort on the part of the student to identify critical services and resources. **For navigator expansion, the Council is considering establishing a Cafe College, much like Nashville’s Reconnect Cafes, which would provide college-agnostic, wrap-around supports to students in the Detroit region.** In the months to come, Detroit Drives Degrees will conduct a more detailed feasibility study to explore opportunities for intersection and expansion. Finally, leaders are still optimistic Governor Whitmer’s Michigan Reconnect program will be implemented, which would bring 11 new Reconnect navigators to the region.



**Strategy 6.2: Expand accelerated, adult-friendly degree program structures.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council; Philanthropic Partners
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term

The majority of today’s postsecondary students—especially adults—juggle work, transportation, and family life with their educational aspirations. And yet, the postsecondary enterprise is largely built for students who can study during normal working hours. To make higher education truly attractive to adults, institutions need to expand their course offerings beyond the traditional schedule and traditional credit hour. Many strategies that incorporate more compressed courses, weekend or part-time scheduling, online or hybrid programs, and competency-based learning should be scaled up across the region. **For this reason, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council will be supporting institutions as they work to expand and scale a number of different, adult-friendly models across the region.** Specific strategies to consider are identified below:

- Institutions could consider ways to better tailor course times to meet the diverse needs of adult learners. One way to go about this would be to harness technology to identify scheduling bottlenecks, especially in the programs that have the most direct connection to the state’s identified workforce needs.
- Online or hybrid programs are another delivery model that can be very successful for adult students. COVID-19 has shown the potential for online course offerings in the region. Moving beyond the immediate crisis, institutions may benefit from a more systematic approach to developing and maintaining online courses, as well as collecting consistent data on online course offerings, enrollments, and other relevant data points.
- Finally, institutions in the region could consider accelerated learning options such as competency-based education (CBE) programs. CBEs enable students to learn at their own pace, often accelerated, by demonstrating mastery of competencies. This can give currently employed individuals a credential with value in the workplace and allow those with prior college credit or work experience to speed along their path to attaining a credential. For example, Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana partnered with employers in the state to identify areas of greatest need and selected two credential programs: Software Development Technical Certificate and Business Operations, Applications, and Technology Technical Certificate.

To recognize those institutions that take serious steps to provide a more welcoming environment for adult learners, the Detroit Drives Degrees working group on adult attainment will be developing a “Reconnect College Seal” as a supplement to financial awards for progress. This designation will be awarded to colleges in the region that have made significant progress to provide flexible and accelerated options to adult learners. Learners who engage with regional adult navigators will be encouraged to enroll at these recognized colleges.



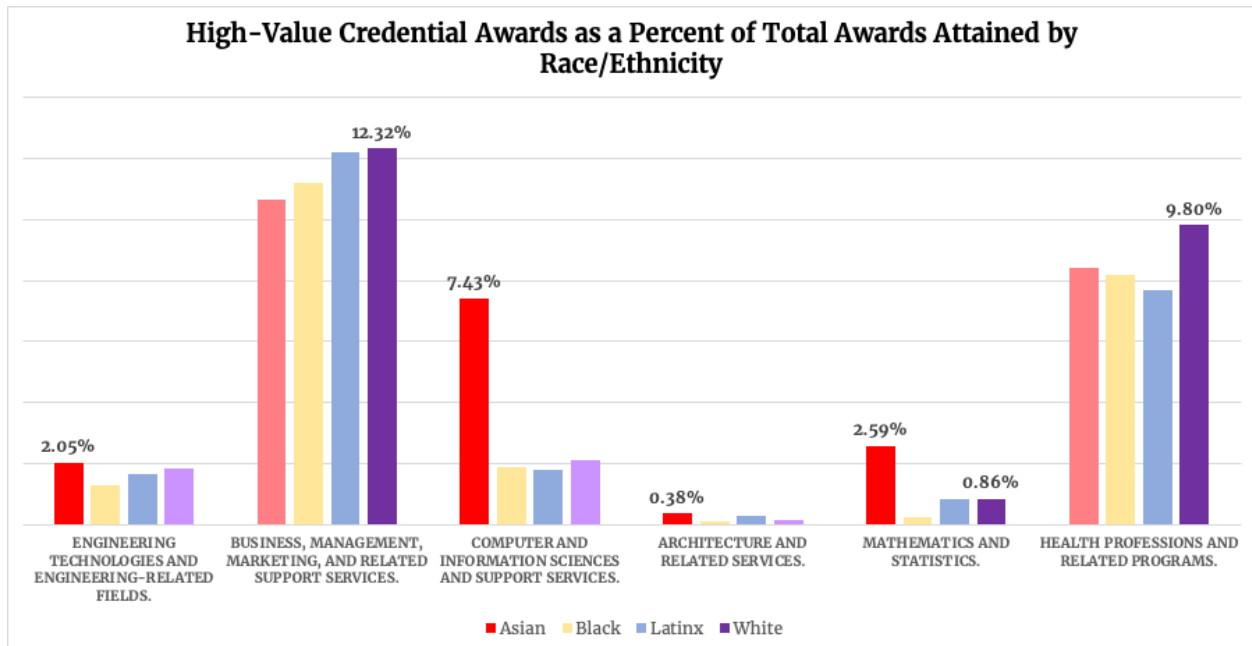
Strategy 6.3: Use a consistent approach to recognize prior learning at institutions.	
<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Regional Intermediaries
<b>Priority:</b>	Long-term
<p>Recognition for prior learning awards credits for college-level learning acquired prior to enrolling in college through work experience, employee training programs, independent study, non-credit courses, military service, or non-college courses or seminars. Assessing outcomes of this learning to provide credit for this prior learning has been shown to increase adults’ motivations to graduate, persistence, and cost-savings, while also lessening time to a degree.</p> <p>Currently, each public institution in the region has its own systems for processing and recognizing prior learning. The processes vary considerably both in form—online versus hard copy application—and expectation for earning credit. A more strategic, common approach to assessing prior learning and awarding credit could go a long way in making the transition back into postsecondary education more seamless for adults.</p> <p>The Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is asking each postsecondary institution in the region to join in facilitated conversations to design a more effective approach for advising for prior learning assessment and training faculty to review materials to determine if the learning is credit-worthy. Detroit Drives Degrees should lead conversations across administrators and faculty to develop a common approach to assessing prior learning and awarding credit. FastPathOhio.com is an example of consortium approaches to streamlining advising and review of credit for prior learning. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) and American Council on Education have developed various resources for institutions and systems to standardize and expand the use of prior learning assessments.</p>	

## Preparing Regional Talent

**Challenge #7: Not all pathways are aligned with high-wage, high-demand careers, and access to those that are aligned is inequitable.**

At its core, Detroit Drives Degrees’ attainment goal was established to help thousands more Detroit residents prosper and ultimately realize education’s promise of economic mobility. An essential part of the mobility equation is delivering on the promise of a meaningful career that provides a family-sustaining wage. While students can succeed in their future in similar ways whether they attain short-term postsecondary or industry certifications, associate degrees or bachelor’s degrees, the general rule of thumb persists: the more education one has, the higher the salary he/she earns. However, within each of those education levels, the data are clear: the field students choose matters. And when fields – specifically pathways within those fields – exist that lead to dead ends, youth and adults who have otherwise taken huge risks to embark on them are deeply harmed.

It is essential all programs in the Detroit region—from liberal arts to industrial welding—align with the diverse array of skills and abilities demanded in the labor market. Yet it was clear from both the stakeholder survey and workgroup meetings that alignment is a challenge. According to the survey, only 2% of respondents strongly agreed college and university programs are aligned to in-demand industries and occupations. Many workgroup participants attributed this to a lack of coordination between employers and educators. As one stakeholder put it, *“The triangulation of Education (Pre-K – 12th & postsecondary), Industry... and Community isn’t well defined or executed, which contributes to the disconnect...”*



Ensuring existing pathways are aligned with the labor market is important, but success and equity within those pathways also demand attention. **In 2019, as a proportion of total credentials attained within each sub-group, Black and Latinx graduates in the Detroit region earned credentials aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs at lower rates than their white and Asian peers.**<sup>29</sup> According to workgroup participants, this starts early, with inequitable access to quality career and technical and work-based learning experiences. These disparities are unacceptable. **As such, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is committed to working collaboratively across employers and educators in the region to ensure more Detroit residents earn high-quality industry aligned credentials.**

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<sup>29</sup> Data for the visual on page 46 is sourced from MI School Data on college degrees and credentials awarded. Credentials chosen based on alignment with high-demand, high-growth industries identified by the Detroit Regional Chamber that also provide a living hourly wage for 1 adult with 2 children (\$29.85).

**Strategy 7.1: Identify and promote postsecondary “credentials of value” that align with high-wage, high-demand industries.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Regional intermediaries
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Postsecondary Institutions; Intermediate School Districts; School Districts
<b>Priority:</b>	Immediate

In this challenging economic environment, neither families nor the economy can afford to have individuals pursue dead-end pathways that do not result in credentials with real value in the evolving job market. With personal finances and local, state, and national economies stretched thin, it has never been more important that academic programs align tightly with the demands of the labor market. The volatile shifts in the labor market as a result of COVID-19 will require the region to conduct new analyses to surface how demand and value of postsecondary credentials have changed in the new context.

The Talent Ready Initiative, taking place in the nation’s capital region, demonstrates an example of a regional effort to continuously identify and promote credentials aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs. This initiative is identifying the D.C. region’s highest value IT occupations and associated credentials; digging in with employers on the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to successfully transition into these roles; and working with these communities to build and transform career pathways that begin in high school and continue through higher education to align to these high value occupations. This work begins with new labor market analyses to surface shifts in the labor market and both the degree and non-degree credentials that have value.

The Detroit region has many valuable partners, like the Youth Policy Lab and the Workforce Intelligence Network, as well as assets at its disposal to conduct these analyses. **As part of this work, Detroit Drives Degrees will lead the region in establishing a common list of credentials of value, based on agreed-upon thresholds for wage and demand.** To the extent possible, the region will leverage real-time labor market information, which takes from job postings and profiles data, to analyze current demand and engage employers to validate and confirm workforce needs.

Promoting and disseminating these high-value credentials are essential. **As a start, Detroit Drives Degrees will update the region’s hot jobs spreadsheet based on the agreed upon list of credentials.** Likewise, districts and postsecondary institutions in the region can take the lead on creating public awareness campaigns to elevate what they learn about specific high-value opportunities for students and their families. Finally, should additional scholarships geared toward adult learners become available, it is recommended a premium be put on those credentials that have the highest value in order to incentivize pathways to quality jobs, especially among the most vulnerable populations.

**Strategy 7.2: Scale up, phase out, and build new pathways at the K-12 and postsecondary level that align with high-demand, high-wage opportunities.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Postsecondary Institutions; Intermediate School Districts; School Districts
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Regional Intermediaries
<b>Priority:</b>	Short-term

Detroit districts and higher education institutions must take what they learn about the trends in demand and employer-valued credentials and apply that knowledge to the design of new programs and the modification of existing programs. Those programs should include embedded non-degree credentialing opportunities employers value for entry into good jobs. Importantly, pathways can and should be aligned across K-12 and postsecondary. As one survey respondent points out, *“In Detroit there needs to be more alignment between high school workforce training and career academy programs and postsecondary skilled trades and professional certificate programs. There is often not clear correlation on how a certificate in high school or course work taken there translates to credits at the community college level.”*

**Designing, building, and launching new policies and programs takes time, but in the more immediate term, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is requesting districts and institutions adapt existing curricula to more tightly align with the skill and credentialing demands of the marketplace.** Likewise, districts and higher education institutions must also eliminate or phase out career-focused programs that are obsolete to the new economy, so students do not embark on dead-end pathways. Doing this entails a review of all technical program offerings to identify gaps between employer needs and postsecondary/K-12 offerings and scaling and phasing out programs as appropriate. At the postsecondary level, it is also important these pathways don’t end at a certificate or certification. Each community college in the region must shore up internal equivalency agreements so students who earn non-credit, non-degree credentials can articulate them easily and earn credit toward a relevant associate degree program. Likewise, transfer agreements across the region must be strengthened to allow for seamless movement between two-year and four-year programs.

**To support this challenging work, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council is planning to lead an independent cross-check of program offerings with labor market needs that incorporates feedback from labor, business and higher education stakeholders to uncover new gaps and opportunities within the system.** To make this an ongoing process and build capacity over time, the region is considering adopting Rhode Island’s strategy of sector “ambassadors,” or education leaders from across the region who examine existing career programs and pathways, make recommendations for improvements, lead professional development, and work alongside industry partners to establish stronger links between classroom learning and the world of work.

**Strategy 7.3: Strengthen regional capacity to coordinate and scale quality work-based learning across secondary and postsecondary schools.**

<b>Lead:</b>	Regional intermediaries
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Intermediate School Districts; School Districts; Postsecondary Institutions
<b>Priority:</b>	Long-term

Rigorous, industry-aligned, work-based learning experiences offered in high school and college are critical to help students develop technical skills and build relevance into learning. **Work-based learning can be especially important to those low-income students, jobseekers, low-skilled incumbent workers, and opportunity youth who may otherwise lack access to the educational opportunities, professional networks, and social capital that often play a critical role in career success.** Further, work-based learning can be an important strategy to increase student interest and understanding of particular career fields.

Many entities exist in the Detroit region that sit at the intersection of education and business/industry. Beyond the Detroit Regional Chamber, the City’s Detroit at Work initiative, Southeast Michigan CEO Group, Downtown Detroit Partnership and Workforce Intelligence Network all play a role in building regional talent aligned with business and industry. Intermediary organizations like the aforementioned are critical to building scale and capacity of quality career pathways, particularly elements of work-based learning. Additionally, Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) is an intermediary in Boston, Massachusetts that connects educators and employers to embed work-based learning into school design, curricula and student supports. It leverages public and private dollars through a 1:2 match of state funds and participating employer funds, which has helped stabilize and grow the program over years. Boston PIC has embedded staff who recruit, place, and prepare students for work-based learning experiences. It also interfaces with employers to recruit them to the work and help them design experiences that meet student needs.

Now, as employers are preoccupied with handling their immediate response to COVID-19 and staying afloat, it is more important than ever for intermediaries to take the lead to keep a high-impact strategy like work-based learning top of mind. **Detroit Drives Degrees will lead the charge to convene regional intermediaries to develop more robust employer engagement strategies and provide quality work-based learning opportunities aligned with academic studies.** Strategies can be pulled from efforts already underway in the region at career and technical centers, Grow Detroit’s Young Talent, and others. Despite a wide range of organizations and groups, during workgroup meetings, employers expressed genuine surprise when learning about some of the innovative programs and pathways offered in the region. There was an earnest desire among employers to know more about creative talent solutions that exist among regional agencies, districts and postsecondary institutions.

**Together these partners are committed to working together to craft a definition for work-based learning in the region and developing criteria to support it.** A full range of work-based learning experiences should be articulated as part of that work: beginning with early awareness activities in elementary school, career exploration activities in middle school, and moving into training and preparation efforts in high school and college, such as internships and pre-apprenticeships. This work should build off of excellent work already underway in the City's Detroit at Work initiative.

## Conclusion

This master plan demonstrates Detroit's commitment to achieving both ambitious goals set by the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council in 2015. Through this process, we have taken a hard look at our region's data, policies, and practices to identify areas of need and map an ambitious action plan for improvement. In so doing, the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council strongly believes the region has positioned itself to be a leader in this work across the country.

Ultimately, to deliver on these recommendations, the region will need to ensure the right conditions and capacity for success are in place. This will require ongoing cross-sector planning, implementation, and problem solving through Detroit Drives Degrees. It will also require deep engagement with the employer community to ensure the activities undertaken are responsive to the needs of Detroit's economy today and in the future. The region is well on its way to putting many of these foundational components in place. Now is the time for Detroit to keep its foot on the gas and accelerate action to ensure all Detroiters have equitable opportunities to prosper.



## Appendix 1: NCHEMS Institutional Attainment Goals

### Setting Targets

The Detroit Regional Chamber contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to estimate each institution's individual contributions to close the 135,000-person shortfall predicted in 2030 (see Appendix 3 for the basis of the 135,000 additional degrees needed regionally).

The analysis included:

- The nine public colleges and universities within the six-county Detroit MSA.
- Two independent colleges in the region with a significant regional mission.
- The six Michigan public universities outside the region that serve the most recent high school graduates from the region (averaging a quarter of their enrollment).

Combined, these 17 colleges and universities enroll over three-quarters of recent high school graduates and issue an estimated 85% of certificates and degrees awarded to residents (of all ages) in the region.

Institution	Credentials Produced Each Year			Credentials Produced Over 10-Year Period		
	Baseline Estimate	2024-25 Target	2029-30 Target	At Baseline Rate	Additional Credentials Needed	Total at Increased Rate
<b>Detroit MSA Community Colleges</b>						
Henry Ford College	1,550	2,350	3,150	15,500	8,700	24,200
Macomb Community College	3,000	4,250	5,550	30,000	13,900	43,900
Oakland Community College	2,750	3,800	4,850	27,500	11,500	39,000
Schoolcraft College	1,700	2,350	3,000	17,000	7,250	24,250
St. Clair Community College	850	1,050	1,250	8,500	2,300	10,800
Wayne County Community College District	1,750	2,250	2,750	17,500	5,600	23,100
<b>Detroit MSA Universities</b>						
Lawrence Technological University	250	350	450	2,500	1,150	3,650
Oakland University	2,800	3,900	5,000	28,000	12,050	40,050
University of Detroit Mercy	500	650	800	5,000	1,700	6,700
University of Michigan - Dearborn	1,200	1,650	2,050	12,000	4,750	16,750
Wayne State University	3,050	4,150	5,250	30,500	12,100	42,600
<b>Statewide Public Universities (Selected)</b>						
Central Michigan University	1,000	1,450	1,850	10,000	4,700	14,700
Eastern Michigan University	1,000	1,400	1,800	10,000	4,350	14,350
Grand Valley State University	1,200	1,700	2,150	12,000	5,250	17,250
Michigan State University	3,300	4,550	5,850	33,000	13,950	46,950
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor	1,750	2,400	3,100	17,500	7,400	24,900
Western Michigan University	900	1,250	1,600	9,000	3,950	12,950
<b>Other Institutions</b>						
	4,950	6,250	7,550	49,500	14,400	63,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>45,750</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>335,000</b>	<b>135,000</b>	<b>470,000</b>

## Methodology

To establish these institutional targets, NCHEMS used the following methodology.

### Baseline Estimates of Credentials Produced by Each Institution to Detroit Students

1. Data from the IPEDS database maintained by the National Center for Educational Statistics for the 2017-18 school year was used to establish:
  - Baseline numbers of undergraduate credentials awarded (certificates of at least one year in length, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees) at each institution.
  - The percent of credentials awarded to students 24 years or younger.
2. Data from Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information's MI School Data website on the initial enrollment in individual colleges within 12 months for public high school graduates in 2016-17, including counties of origin to identify students from the Detroit region.
3. Undergraduate credentials awarded to students 24 years or younger were apportioned based on the share of recent high school graduates from the Detroit region.
4. For all adults earning credentials, county of origin is assumed to be the county in which the institution is located.
5. Estimates were rounded to the nearest 50 students.

In total, NCHEMS estimates approximately 33,500 postsecondary credentials are earned each year by residents of the Detroit region at Michigan public and private colleges and universities, representing one-third of the postsecondary credentials awarded statewide.

### Projections to Establish Institutional Targets

1. As the region needs to significantly accelerate the current pace of postsecondary credential production, the estimates assume all 135,000 additional degrees will be produced by Michigan institutions.
2. No adjustments were made for changes to in- and out-migration rates, nor changes in the numbers of Detroit regional students earning credentials from out-of-state institutions (9% of recent high school graduates and an unknown number of adults).
3. To apportion the 135,000 additional degrees among Michigan institutions, NCHEMS created an initial estimate based on the current proportion of the state's credential production. That estimate was adjusted to take into account two factors:
  - Credential Productivity: Credentials awarded for every 100 FTE for all 2- or 4-year institutions within the state, divided by the same calculation for the institution. Institutions with lower levels of credential productivity should be able to make larger improvements in their productivity, relative to more highly productive institutions, in order to meet the regional goal.
  - Population Change: Due to declining birth rates, the number of high school graduates in Michigan is projected to steadily decrease, with a drop of 12% (or nearly 16,000 graduates) by 2030, which will have a significant impact on the future enrollment of institutions that primarily serve students directly out of high school. The relative impact of projected population change for each institution is based on the current and projected service base determined for each age group (15-19, 20-24, and 25-39), based on Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information county population projections by age group.

## Appendix 2: Regional Projections and Trajectory Analysis

### Estimates of Regional Attainment Needs

1. NCHEMS estimated that in 2018 47.2% of working age adults (25-64) in the Detroit Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) have a college degree or high-quality postsecondary certificate, using:
  - US Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates.
  - Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce's estimate that 4% of Michigan working-age adults have a high-quality postsecondary certificate, adjusted to 3.97% based on Detroit MSA's share of the state's "some college, no degree" residents.
  - Adding two years of the average annual percentage change in attainment from 2007 to 2016 (0.57%) to the base year of 2016 (midpoint of 5-year estimate from 2014-2018).
2. Assuming no changes in credential production trends or migration patterns, a straight-line projection was calculated using the average annual percent change in attainment from 2007-2016. This results in an estimate of 54.1% attainment for the Detroit region by 2030.
3. To calculate the additional credentials necessary to meet the 60% goal of the Detroit Drives Degrees initiative, population projections of working-age adults for the Detroit region were compiled from Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information.

### Estimates of Equity Gaps

American Community Survey data reports attainment by both age and race/ethnicity, but commonly published tables at the MSA-level tend to include all adults – including those 65 years old and above – and are only available for one-year estimates. ESG estimated the Black-white and Latinx-white attainment gaps for working-age adults by adjusting the 2018 American Community Survey one-year estimates of attainment for adults Age 25+ by race by the ratio of Ages 25-64 attainment levels to Ages 25+ for all races.

### Projections of the Impact of Reaching Targets

For each of the seven challenges described in the report, ESG identified an associated metric and estimated a target for improvement, which when added together, will close the 135,000-person gap predicted in 2030. To estimate these targets, ESG first captured the baseline rate and baseline denominator for each indicator and estimated potential degree/credential yield of a given increase, based on rigorous impact studies on the effect of each indicator on postsecondary attainment – or professional judgement when such studies were unavailable.

Key Indicator	Baseline	Baseline Source	Target	Impact by 2030	Basis of Impact
Direct from High School Enrollment	68%	MI School Data, 2017-18 HS graduates 12-month enrollment	82%	30,000	53% 6-year completion rate for region (Chamber report) applied to added enrollment
College Readiness	Unknown		Additional 20% of graduates	6,000	College Board + NACEP report 10% increase in college completion for students participating in EPSOs.
Remediation Placement & Reform	26%	MI School Data, 2016-17 Remedial in Any Subject for recent HS graduates. Multiplied by 1.33 to account for first-time adults - IPEDS share for 11 Detroit institutions.	5%	7,000	Estimate that gateway course completion leads to 10% increase in degree completion.
Student Progression	41%	MI School Data, Complete 24 Credits within 12 Months for recent HS graduates. Multiplied by 1.33 to account for first-time adults - IPEDS share for 11 Detroit institutions.	72%	16,000	National Student Clearinghouse reports 9% increase in completion FT students.
Adult Enrollment	8,000	IPEDS First-time degree/certificate-seeking, not 12 months from HS graduation for 11 Detroit institutions. Increased by NCHEMS estimate that the 11 produce 58% of Detroit's credentials.	16,000	24,000	National Student Clearinghouse 53% average completion rate of adults applied to added enrollment
Adult Completion	32%	MISchoolData Age 25+ enrollment, 11 Detroit MSA public colleges & universities + increased adult enrollment from line above	52%	30,000	Calculated based on target improvement
Credentials of Value	Unknown		2,000 additional	22,000	Based on trends in national best practices