In partnership with the Education Design Lab, the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Montana’s public two-year colleges, announced the launch of the **Year-to-Career Initiative**. Through an EDL facilitated design process, colleges, employers, learners, and local stakeholders are collaboratively designing skills-focused micro-pathway programs to meet the state’s growing workforce needs.

Through this initiative, **12 Montana colleges** will undergo a two-year transformation to enhance their role as sustainable engines of economic growth and regional talent suppliers. Participating institutions will establish **12-20 micro-pathways** – stackable credentials that can be flexibly earned in less than a year. These programs will put learners both on the path to an associate degree or to immediate employment in high-demand fields across the state.

### Insights from the Occupation Selection Survey

- Three primary sectors we will design pathways around are **healthcare, education** and **technology, trades, & tourism (T3)**.

- The top four occupations identified as having the greatest need are **medical assistant, welder, computer support specialist**, and **IT support specialist**.

- Some of things to consider in order to meet the needs of employers and l(earners) include **securing tuition funding, identifying qualified instructors, modality & scheduling**, and how to build a **sustainable talent pipeline**.

### What’s Next?

- OCHE and EDL hosts employer and student discovery sessions at Missoula College.

- The prioritization of sectors and occupations, by assessing workforce data, trends, and employer needs.

- Creating l(earner) profiles to better understand the populations we intend serve and identify the support resources they will need to successfully complete a micro-pathway program.