



Build better skills for better performance.®

**Building Pathways in Michigan: Bridging Education and
Workforce for All**

Fostering High-Performing Business- Higher Education Partnerships

April 2, 2026
Kalamazoo, MI

Business-Higher Education Forum: *Where Solutions Are Built*



Frank Avery

Managing Director

frank.avery@bhef.com

130+

New Pathways

75+

Collaborative Projects

6 months

Accelerating results

BHEF helps network and strategic partners:

- Identify high-value emerging skills
- Develop pathways that quickly source high-value talent through higher education, and
- Lead action-oriented forums and partnerships

- **The BHEF Approach**
 - **Trends Impacting Workforce-Higher Education**
 - **Approaches to Capture Trends**
-
-

BHEF & Our Approach



Skills partnerships are a priority, but not easy to do well



87%

of **higher education leaders** agree that partnerships with business are a priority



89%

of **business leaders** agree that partnerships with higher education are a priority



22%

of **higher education leaders** say they are fully executing a partnership strategy

The Business-Higher Education Forum is a national network connecting pioneering corporate and higher education leaders to identify emerging skills and **co-develop pathways that address talent gaps.**



We empower and catalyze **collaborations** that deliver **accelerated, inclusive, and effective solutions** across education and work.

Business and university leaders join BHEF to **lead innovation** that meets the changing talent needs of learners, workers, and businesses.

A National Alliance of Cross-Sector Talent Leaders



Our mission is to build the agile, inclusive higher education paths that align to the workforce of the future

With our network and partners, we focus on three goals critical for our economy and people:



Increase learners/earners with high-value skills and credentials aligned to employer needs



Expand access & adoption of work-integrated learning models that inclusively connect and prepare talent



Scale & implement with regional networks and leaders

Our Impact

The Forum's work creates business-higher education partnerships and learner-centric programs that build new models and produce lasting results



500+
businesses
engaged



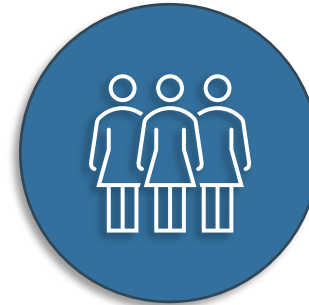
50+
new
partnerships



75+
programs
piloted



130+
new academic
pathways



200K
workers &
learners
engaged



71%
of learners are
from
nontraditional
populations

AI & the role of higher education in workforce solutions

Skills Shifts at All Career Stages

*>12% of
entry level
roles
automated*

*By 2030,
70% of
skills used
in jobs will
change*

*60% of
workforce
will need
upskiling
by 2030*

AI has arrived. Are leaders ready?

CEOs are increasingly taking the reigns on AI skills investments in their firms.

88%

Of leaders see the importance of AI for their economy & workforce

55%

Of states have leadership in place to oversee strategic AI initiatives

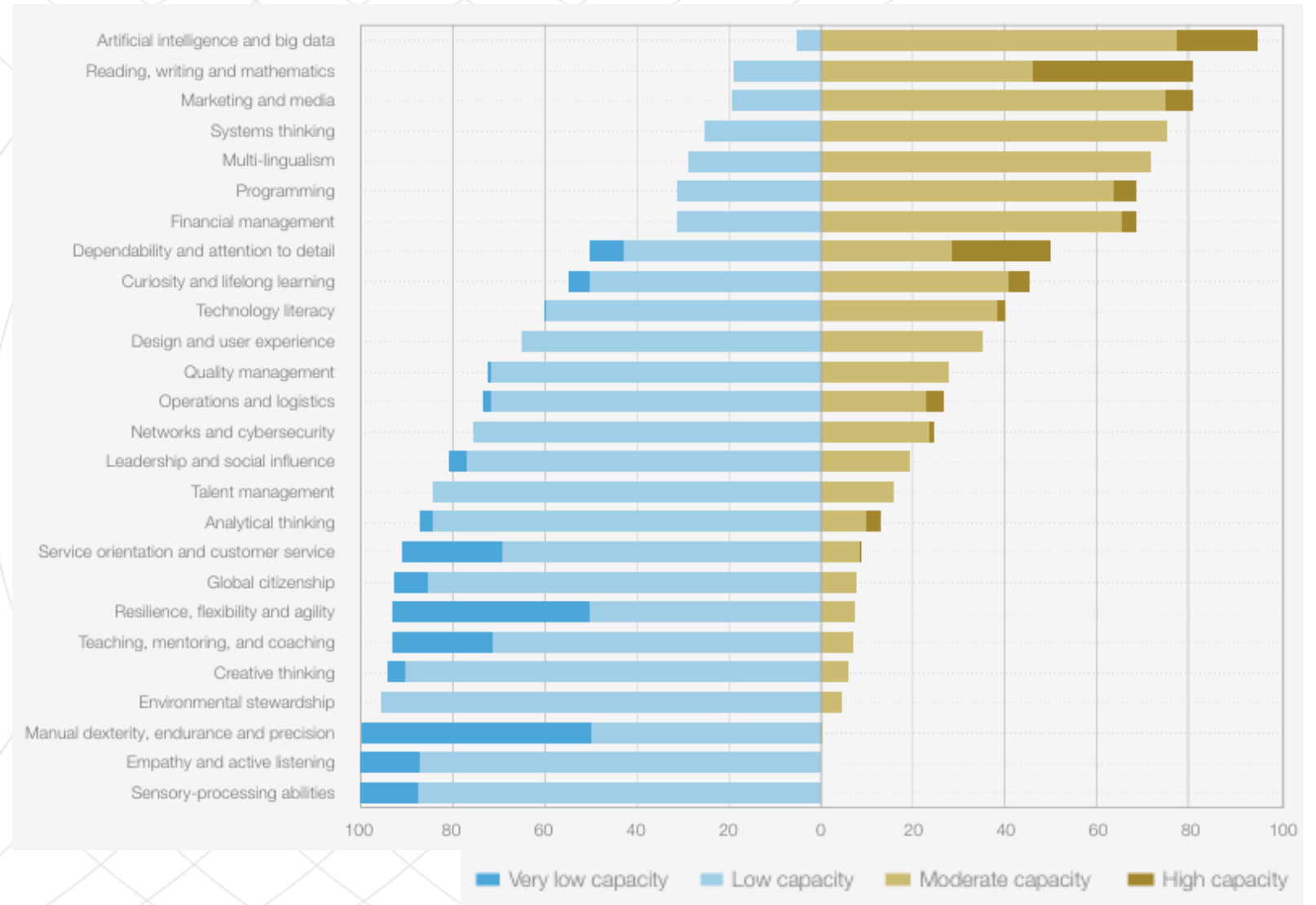
6%

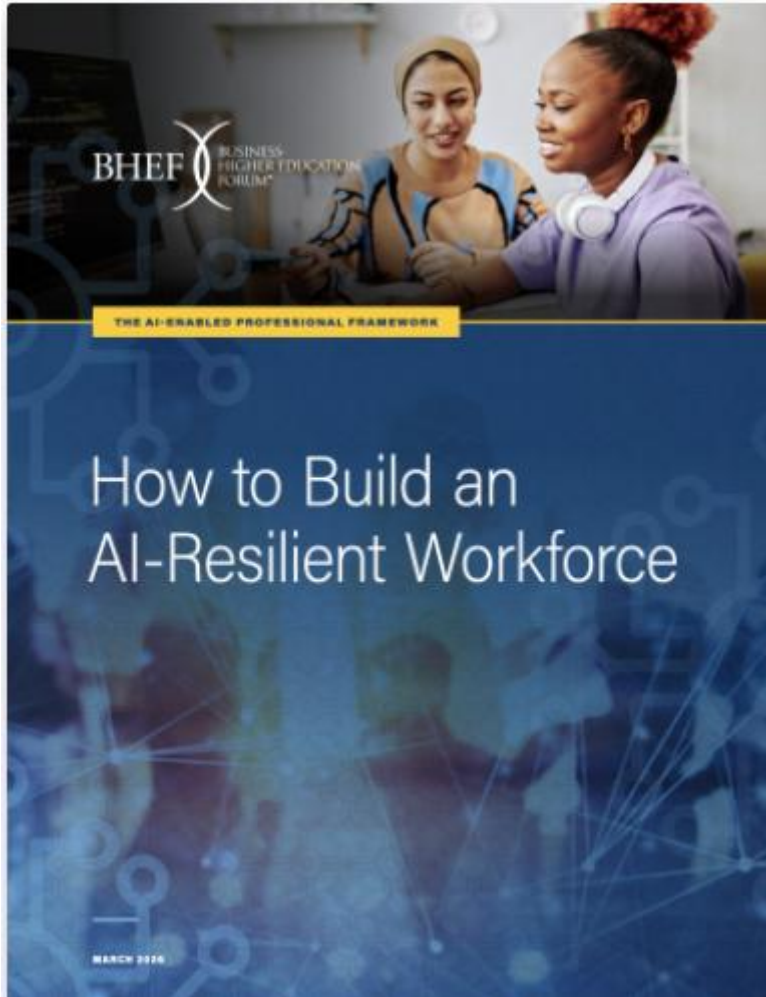
Of states have a defined plan to monitor and act on AI's impact

AI is Substituting *Skills* Significantly for workers Across Occupations and Sectors

GenAI is poised to disrupt a variety of skillsets, from technology and data related to writing, marketing, and even certain durable/human skills.

Human skills are more important than ever.





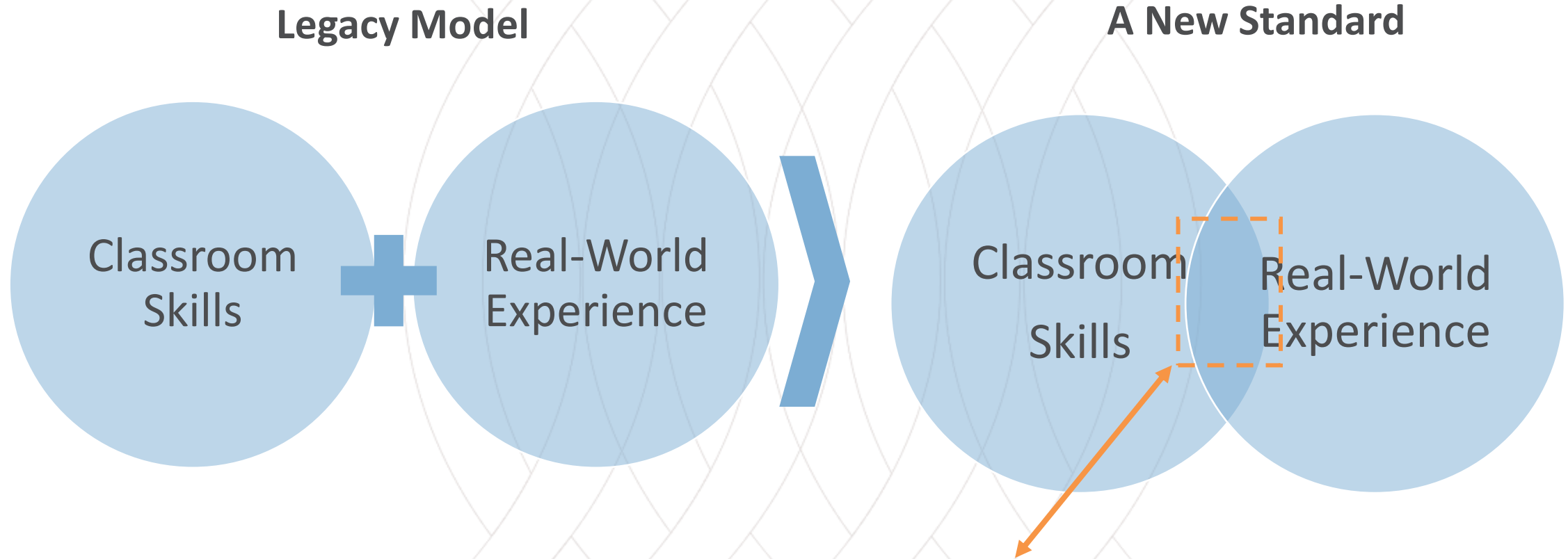
What competencies do AI-Enabled Professionals need at different stages of a career?

COMPETENCIES	ASPIRING LEARNER / CAREER STARTER	EMERGING PROFESSIONAL	SKILLED PRACTITIONER	STRATEGIC LEADER	EXECUTIVE LEADER
AI Literacy	Understand basic AI concepts and terminology	Apply AI concepts to tasks; aware of emerging AI tools	Integrate AI into projects and workflows	Shape organizational AI adoption strategies	Guide enterprise-wide AI strategy and investments
Data Literacy	Interpret basic data and visualizations	Use data insights for decisions; recognize bias	Manage and model data for AI insights	Oversee ethical and effective data use	Set data and AI governance frameworks
Critical Thinking, Problem-solving, & Creativity	Question AI outputs; identify basic risks	Solve problems using AI tools under guidance	Independently select and deploy AI solutions	Lead AI-enabled complex problem-solving	Anticipate systemic AI challenges and opportunities
Ethics, Governance & Responsible AI Use	Recognize ethical issues (bias, privacy)	Practice responsible AI use	Lead responsible AI initiatives in teams	Shape organizational responsible AI policies	Champion public and global responsible AI leadership
Digital & Computational Skills	Use AI-powered applications; basic tech comfort	Modify and optimize workflows with AI	Integrate, manage, or build AI-enhanced tools	Drive AI-based digital transformation	Architect future-ready digital and AI ecosystems
Collaboration & Communication in AI Context	Explain basic AI concepts to peers	Collaborate in AI-augmented teams	Lead multidisciplinary AI teams	Align AI messaging across business functions	Influence enterprise and public AI narratives
Adaptability & Continuous Learning	Stay curious and open to AI trends	Experiment with new AI tools and methods	Advocate for AI learning among peers	Sponsor organizational AI learning initiatives	Lead industry-wide AI workforce development efforts

AI-Enabled Professional Competencies Framework © 2026 by Business-Higher Education Forum is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Work-Integrated Learning as a Path Forward

As AI drives skills growth, businesses need real-world skills



Colleges and universities can play a leading role in being where workers and learners develop durable skills needed to “supervise” AI technologies. But access to high-quality, integrated experiences remains too low.

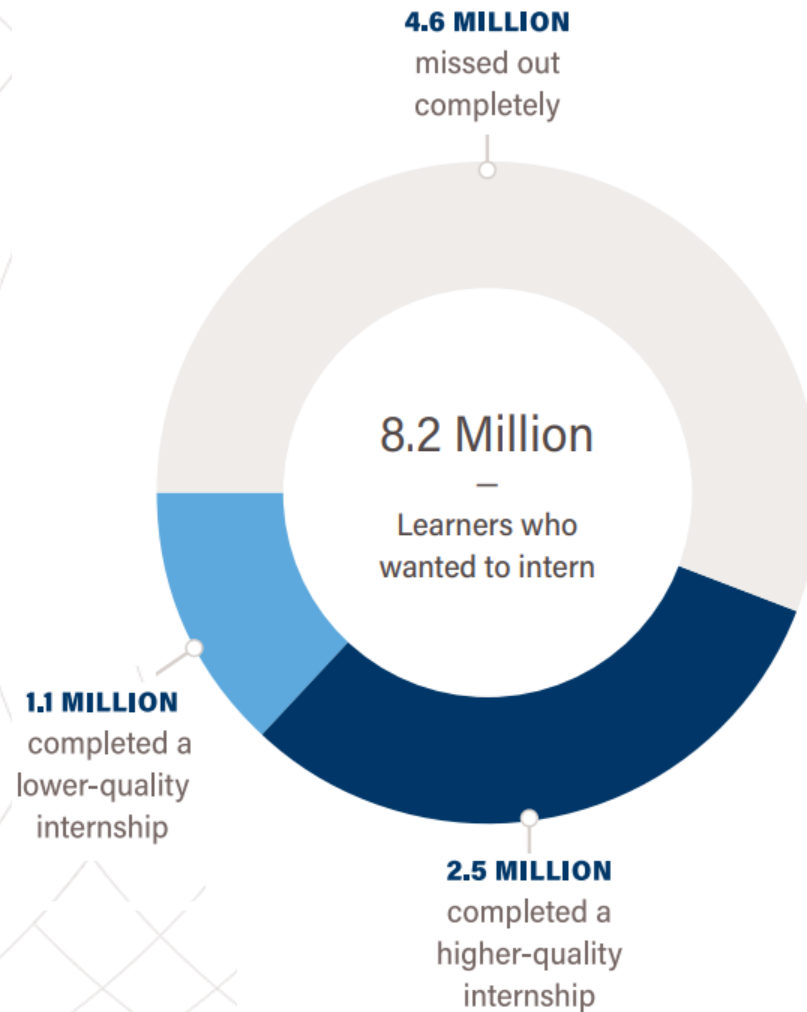
Work-Based & Experiential Learning are Key

Impacts of Internship on Student Outcomes



Sources: BHEF Expanding Internship Report 2024

Yet existing supply is insufficient and unevenly distributed

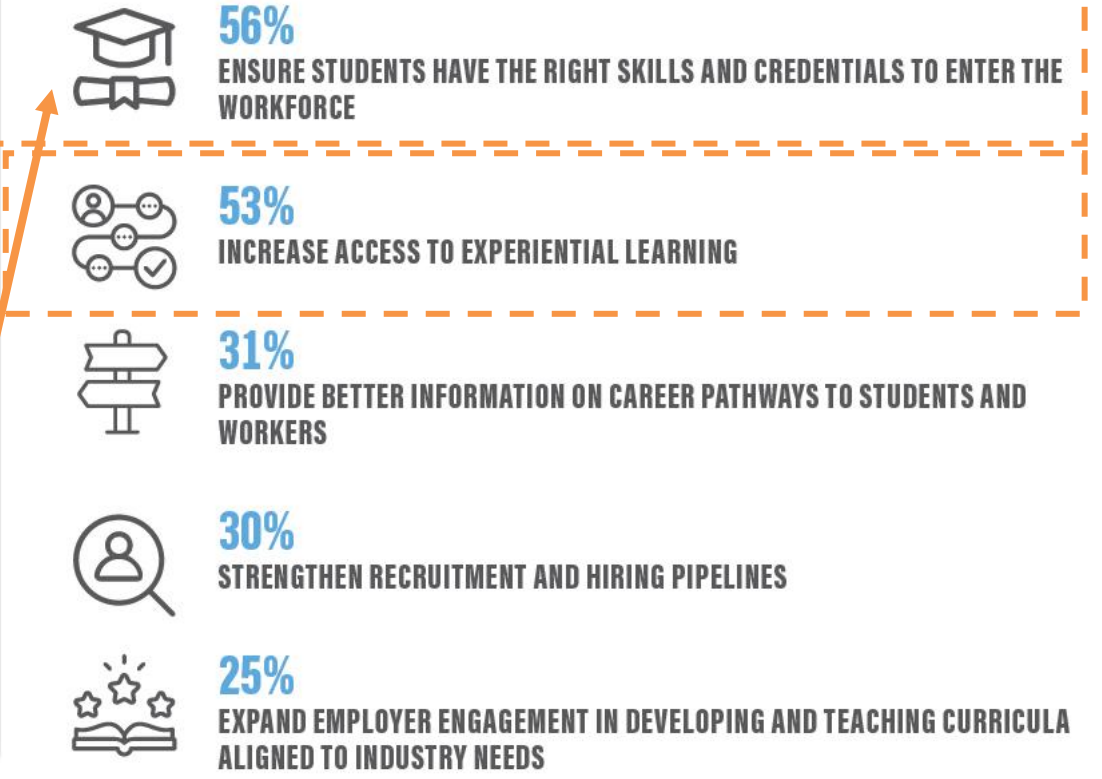
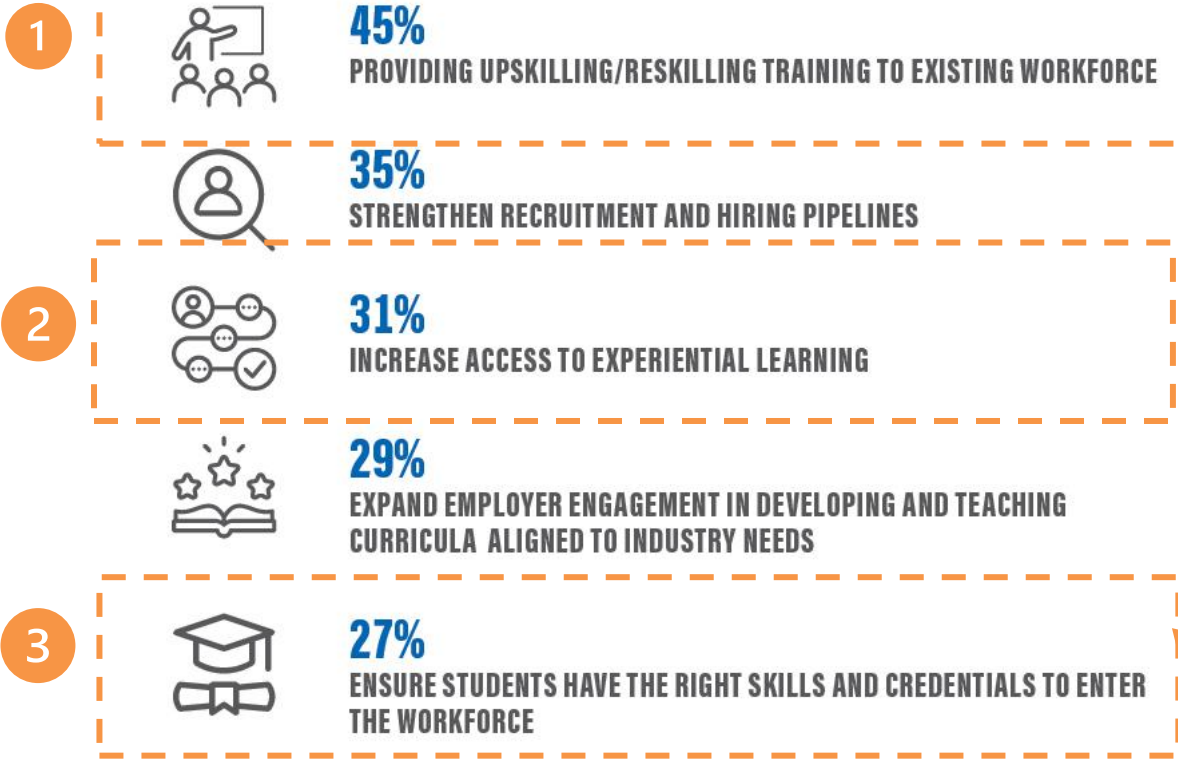




Partnership Expectations Alignment & Mismatch

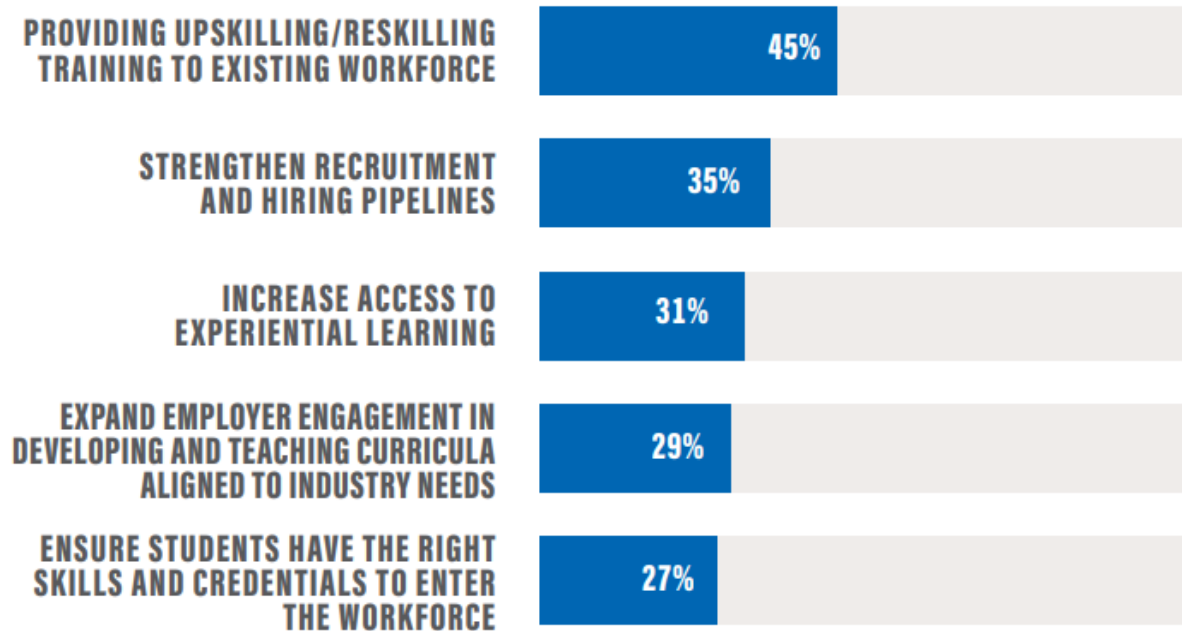
Business Leaders Select Top Priorities for Higher Education Partnerships

Higher Education Leaders Select Top Priorities for Business Partnerships



Higher Education has to deliver for today's expectations

FIG. 10 **Business Leaders** Select Top Priorities for Higher Education Partnerships



Old Models Made New through HEIs

Stackable credentials

Related instruction for apprenticeships at all levels

On-demand learning & development

[Source: BHEF "Forging Partnerships" Report \(2024\)](#)

Regional Leaders & High-Performing Business-Higher Education Partnerships

Creating the conditions for all to participate in AI-enabled economies

Guiding Themes



1. **Intermediaries are Key:** They convening business needs, creating shared articulation strategies to create scale of demand, and sustaining long-term partnerships.
*Regional Sector Partnerships, industry associations, chambers of commerce, regional workforce boards, etc. **Must build a governance and staffing strategy.***

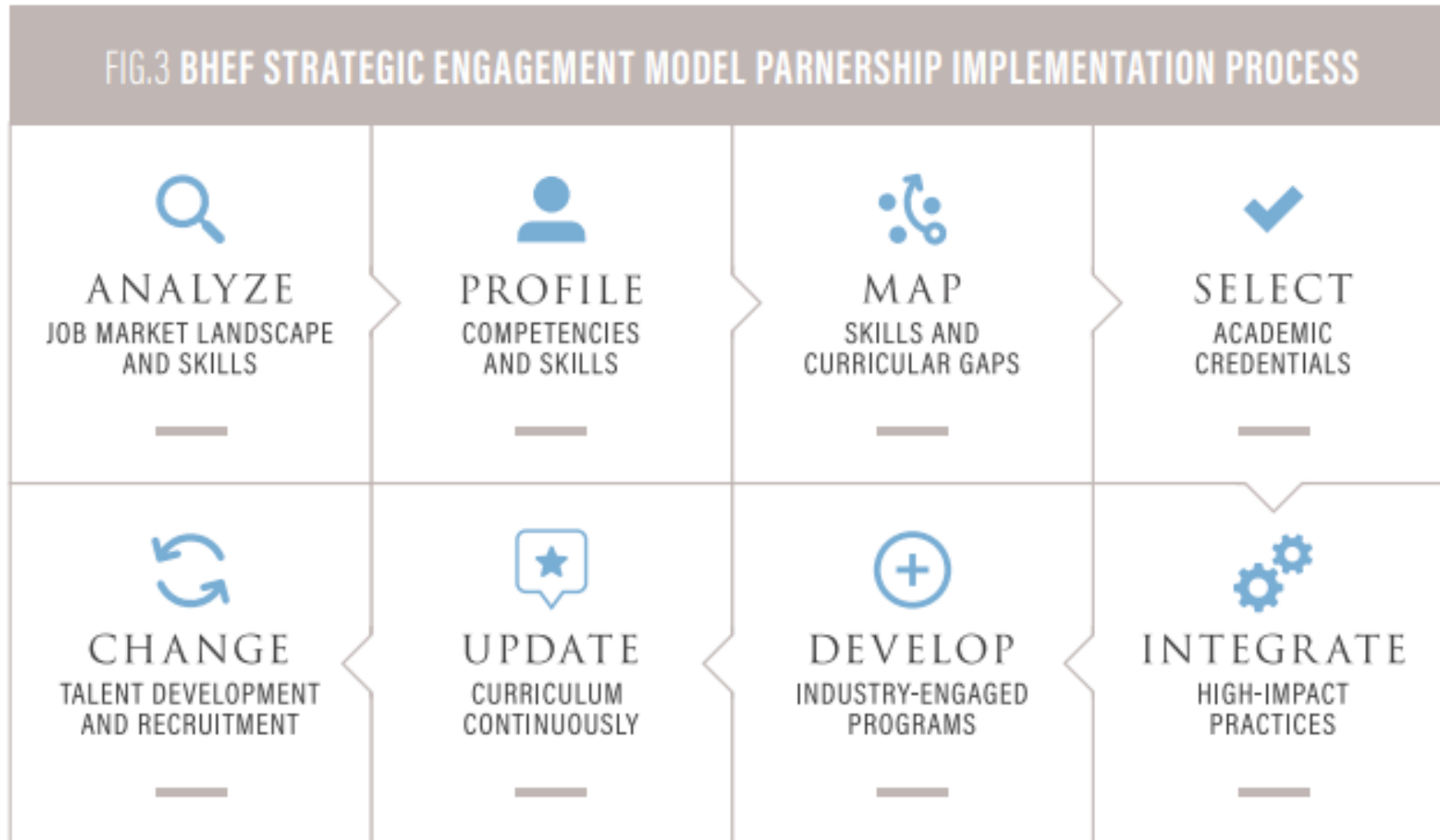


2. **Clear Signaling Mechanisms:** Shared skills competencies, candidate skill profiles, or accurate up-to-date job listings. **AI tools are rapidly increasing speed, quality, and agility.**



3. **Executives are Critical:** Internally, executives bridge business vision & strategy and provide credibility to align talent management and SMEs to contribute. Externally, they create the signals for shared need.
Critical for business engagement, but applies to all partners.

Our Approach: 1-to-1 (B2HE)



Our Approach: Multi-to-Multi BHEF's Four-Phase Approach for Business-Aligned Ecosystems

Business-Higher Education Forum Powers National Playbook on Place-Based Workforce Partnerships for Corporations and Higher Education through Workforce Partnership Initiative

June 18, 2025 | Washington, D.C. — The Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), the national implementation partner for the Business Roundtable Workforce Partnership Initiative (WPI), is pleased to announce the release of WPI's latest publication, *The WPI Playbook: How Business-Education Partnerships Prepare Tomorrow's Talent*. Created under a partnership by Business Roundtable, BHEF, and JPMorganChase, the playbook was unveiled yesterday at the Business Roundtable 2025 CEO Workforce Forum in Washington, D.C., by JPMorganChase Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jamie Dimon. The playbook provides corporate executives, higher education leaders, and policy leaders a strategic roadmap to build scalable, high-impact workforce development partnerships to meet today's economic competitiveness needs.



Nick Timiraos (Chief Economics Correspondent, Wall Street Journal), Kathy Warden (Chair, Chief Executive Officer and President, Northrop Grumman Corporation) and Jamie Dimon (Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, JPMorganChase)

Phase 1

Laying the Groundwork

Before a business can engage peer companies and higher education institutions, it will need to define the problem and develop a plan of action.

Steps

- 1 Clarify Expectations of Senior Management
- 2 Analyze the Talent Ecosystem
- 3 Formulate a Project Plan

Phase 2

Partnering with Peer Employers

As new partners come on board, plans begin to take shape, and leaders uncover the specific set of skills the region needs most.

Steps

- 4 Recruit Employers with Similar Talent Needs
- 5 Agree on the Basic Partnership Structure
- 6 Identify Education and Training Needs

BHEF's Four-Phase Approach for Business-Led Ecosystems

Phase 3

Engaging Higher Education

The involvement of higher education translates skill requirements into curricula and preliminary plans into action.

- | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|
| Steps | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | Select Appropriate Higher Education Partners | Resolve Known Barriers to Implementation | Build Curriculum to Skill Specifications |

Phase 4

Implementing the Program

Though implementation will vary by site, partners will always need to recruit, monitor, and sustain.

- | | | | |
|-------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Steps | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | Recruit Participants from Target Populations | Monitor and Refine the Program | Sustain and Expand Successful Strategies |



Business Roundtable Joins Business, Government and Higher Education Officials to Announce the Connecticut Workforce Partnership Initiative

February 16, 2023

Hartford, Conn. – Today, Business Roundtable, Stanley Black & Decker, Accenture and the Connecticut Governor’s Workforce Council joined together to launch a new Workforce Partnership Initiative (WPI) program in Connecticut. WPI now operates in nine regions throughout the country. Through WPI, Roundtable CEOs partner with local colleges and universities to accelerate and scale best-in-class workforce readiness programs and develop a steady talent pipeline that meets the specific needs of a particular region.

Business-Higher Education Forum and Trellis Foundation Announce Major Expansion of Workforce Partnership Initiative in Texas

Media Contact:

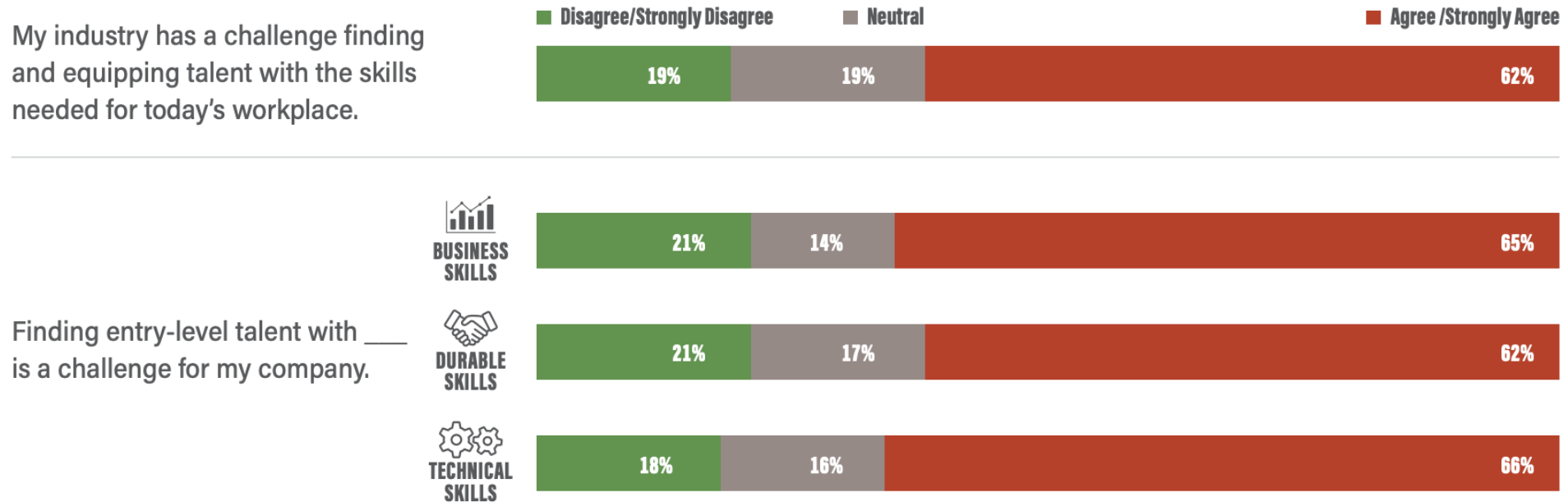
Frank Avery | Managing Director
frank.avery@bhef.com | (678) 772-9326

April 2, 2025 – SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA — Today at the final day of the Business-Higher Education Forum’s (BHEF) Spring 2025 Convening, BHEF and Trellis Foundation announced a \$500,000 investment to BHEF to expand the Workforce Partnership Initiative: Texas (WPI Texas) to new communities across the state of Texas. Hosted by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo President and BHEF Vice Chair Jeff Armstrong, the convening marked the formal launch of this next phase of work which builds on the ongoing impact of WPI in Texas.

WPI Texas launched in May 2022 in collaboration with the Texas Business Leadership Council and Texas Association of Community Colleges. WPI Texas quickly gained momentum in the state with business executives who continue to report the need for high-performing business-higher education partnerships. At a June 2023 WPI Texas business roundtable hosted by BHEF in San Antonio, 80% of business leaders in attendance reported that it is difficult or very difficult to find and hire new workers in the region. In a similar October 2024 roundtable in

Partnerships are critical for preparing learners with future-ready skills

3.1 Business Leaders' Perception of Talent and Skills Challenges

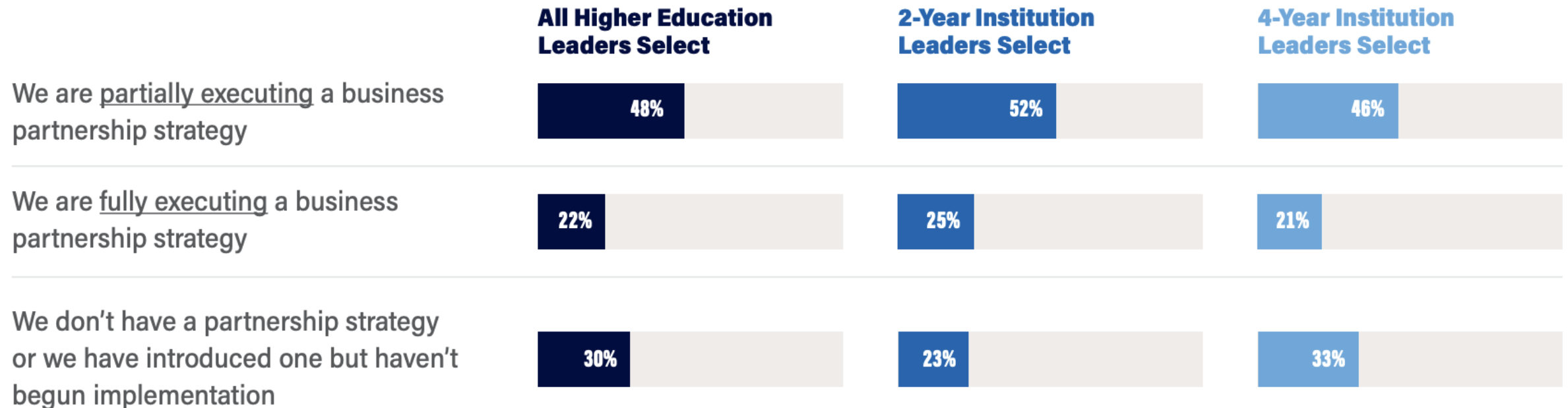


Note: N=380 business leader responses. Fig. 1 shows the percent of business leader respondents who select statement. Survey Question: "Please rate your agreement with the following statements as it pertains to skill shortages: Finding entry-level talent with business skills is a challenge for my company; Finding entry-level talent with soft or durable skills is a challenge for my company; Finding entry-level talent with the technical skills needed for emerging occupations is a challenge for my company; My industry has a challenge finding and equipping talent with the skills needed for today's workplace."

Source: SSPRS 2024 responses.

Community Colleges Can Provide a Model for Success

Status of Higher Education's Business Partnerships by Institution Type



Note: N=226 higher education leader responses. Fig. 13 shows the percent of respondents who selected each option. Survey Question: "What is the status of your institution's business partnerships?"

Source: SSPRS 2024 responses.



Build better skills for better performance.®

Closing the Gap: Models for Success

States are America's Best Laboratories

for importing world-leading practices that integrate emerging tech, empowered intermediaries, and activating integrated degree-based & work-based learning solutions. Higher ed can drive these practices.

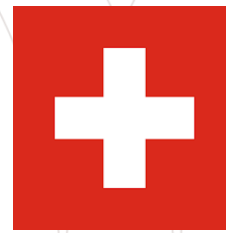
Consider:



Highly integrated degrees through earn-and-learn pathways funded through industry levies.

HEIs are deep re-skilling partners for associate through master's degree skills.

Industry organizes for shared standards as "co-opetition"



Companies see their earn-and-learn pathways through universities as key ROI.

Learners are in the workplace performing productive tasks immediately.

Career switching through earn-and-learn degrees encouraged and utilized across class.



Co-equal shared governance between business, workers, and education.

Ability to jointly tackle issues like AI skills. Germany started in 2018.

Half of students pursue vocational education which, in Germany, includes a degree.

CASE STUDY: EMPLOYER SIGNALING TO BUILD PATHS INTO KEY REGIONAL ROLES

Problem:

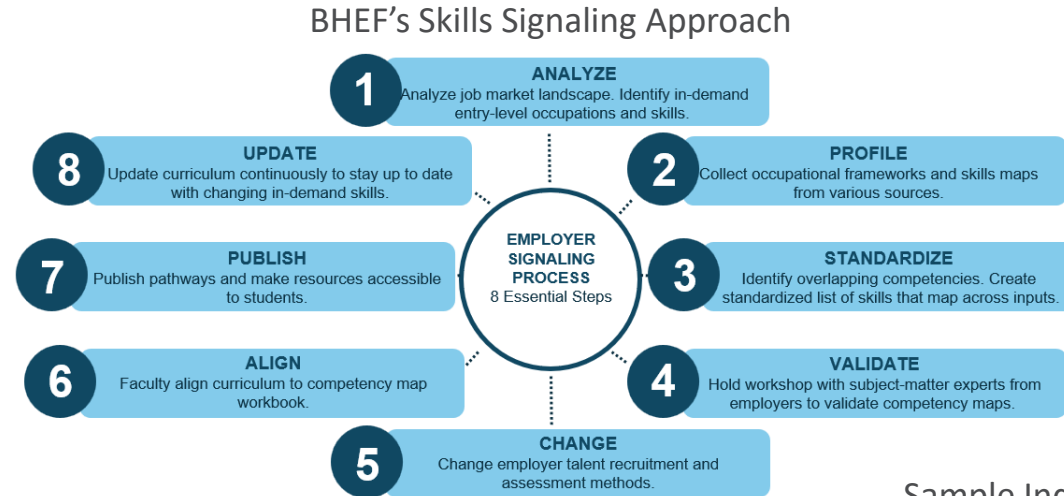
- High-demand and limited supply for entry level, in-demand roles in finance, business, and tech.

Solution:

- BHEF led work with key regional industry groups incl. Partnership for NYC, NY Jobs CEO Council, to develop competency framework for enhancing curricula and preparing a skilled workforce aligned with industry needs.



BHEF built skills signaling mechanisms to inform employer industry alignment using our unique methodologies



Sample Industry-Validated Competency Map

Software Developer Competencies

Software Developer Fundamentals

- 1.1 Computer Programming Fundamentals
- 1.2 Internet Fundamentals

Software Developer Core

- 2.1 Programming/Scripting
- 2.2 Testing and Problem Solving

DevOps

- 3.1 DevOps

Cloud

- 4.1 Cloud Computing Fundamentals
- 4.2 Data Structures, Algorithms, and Databases
- 4.3 Version Control
- 4.4 Secure Coding Principles
- 4.5 Agile Principles and Practices
- 4.6 Product – Level Development

Web Application Development

- 5.1 Web Application Development

Mobile Application Development

- 6.1 Mobile Application Development

Professional Skills

- 7.1 Communication
- 7.2 Adaptability and Good Feedback Behaviors

CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING THE ECOSYSTEM WITH PATHWAYS

Problem:

- Severe deficits in cybersecurity talent
- Increasing need to protect business information and systems against cyber risks

Solution:

- Diverse talent ecosystem that meets regional need for in-demand, high-skilled, high-wage cyber jobs

Through a philanthropic grant, BHEF partnered with government agencies and members Northrop Grumman and University System of Maryland to develop system-level cybersecurity pathways on multiple campuses.

- **First undergraduate cyber honors program** in the U.S.
- **Served full-time and working adult students** via online programs, certification programs, and bachelor's degree



- **Ensured graduates have needed skills and pathways to work-based learning**
- **10,000+ bachelor's degrees awarded** in cybersecurity
- **\$2.785M+ scholarships** through UMBC's Cyber Scholars Program

CASE STUDY: WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (WPI) – TEXAS

This initiative focuses on aligning education and training with real-time labor market needs—especially in high-demand fields identified under House Bill 8.

Together, community colleges, private sector leaders, and key intermediaries are creating accelerated, skills-based pathways that position more Texans for career success.



The Workforce Partnership Initiative (WPI) empowers employers to take the lead in shaping talent pipelines by collaborating with local higher education institutions.

WPI expanded to El Paso, Dallas, and San Antonio in 2022 and is currently growing its footprint.



CASE STUDY: CREATING NEW PATHWAYS

EY redesigned hiring practices to enable increased hiring of associate degree graduates for key roles.

"We realized that many of the tasks required by our service delivery center could be performed by someone with an associate degree. The pilot became a strategy to meet our staffing needs and realize cost efficiencies. It was also an opportunity to give individuals meaningful work based on their skills and training."

- Ellen Glazerman, Executive Director, EY Foundation, and Americas Director, EY University Relations



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT



San Antonio College

Strategic Alignment for Impact

Clear Goals & Outcomes: EY and Alamo Colleges set a shared objective—recruiting 230 students into entry-level roles within three years. This alignment provided a roadmap for success.

Addressing Workforce Challenges: EY needed a new talent pipeline due to a nationwide decline in accounting graduates. Partnering with Alamo Colleges unlocked a pool of skilled associate degree holders.

Mutual Ownership & Defined Roles

Bridging Industry & Education: With EY new to working with community colleges, Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) played a key role in translating goals and structuring the partnership.

Clear Responsibilities: Both partners adapted processes and expectations to ensure efficient collaboration and program execution.

Delivering ROI for Both Partners

For EY: The partnership filled staffing needs, created cost efficiencies, and diversified talent pipelines. The success of the model has influenced EY's approach to future workforce initiatives.

For Alamo Colleges: The collaboration reinforced the value of an associate degree, established Alamo as a trusted industry partner, and provided a tested, scalable model for future partnerships.

CASE STUDY: BUILDING REGIONAL WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Problem:

- Urgent need for tech talent for Connecticut businesses
- Challenges sourcing talent
- 50%+ of tech job postings require a bachelor's degree
- Local colleges and universities struggle to produce graduates
- Skills gap negatively impacting state economy

Solution:

- Create workforce accelerator to align higher education to business needs

BHEF developed an accelerated approach that involved the entire state's workforce and higher education ecosystem.



In partnership with the New England Board of Higher Education and State of Connecticut, BHEF created the **Tech Talent Accelerator initiative**. **In just two years:**

- **Engaged 79 partners** across business, higher education, nonprofit, and government
- **Provided microgrants to faculty to create tech programs** or embed tech credentials into existing programs, mapped to industry partner needs
- **Developed and tailored tech microcredentials** in areas such as data analytics, cybersecurity, mobile application development, and game development
- **Governor spoke at statewide summit** to advance a tech-talent action plan and gain employer hiring commitments
- Colleges launched **15 programs** enrolling more than 450 learners
- Learners earned **117 industry-recognized credentials**, completed 109 internships, secured 116 jobs, and received 9 promotions

Three Ways We Can Collaborate

Ask us about our readiness assessment

Using a proprietary assessment tool, we regularly help our Network Partners assess their internal readiness for corporate partnerships.

Partner on capacity-building models, like partnering with us on our Fellowship

Our models are often easily tailored for different use cases, whether region, sector-specific, or otherwise.

Lead the Conversation Regionally using items like our AI Framework

Bring these conversations back to your local business community, policy leaders, and campuses. Our AI Framework is a great way to start the conversation. We often help partners “prompt” and even co-host.

We regularly help regional business alliances, higher education systems, individual institutions, and their teams with these, and similar, approaches to get the process started.

Learn About the Framework | *Get Involved*



Frank Avery
Managing Director
frank.avery@bhef.com
(678) 772-9326

1 Dupont Circle NW
Suite 360
Washington, DC 20036

www.bhef.com/publications

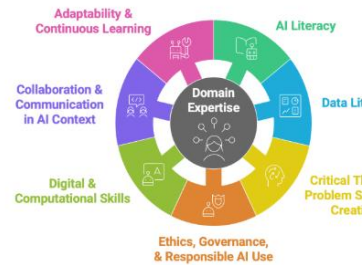
[BHEF's AI & the Future of Talent Collaborative](#)

[BHEF's AI & Future of Talent Advisors](#)

[BHEF's AI-Enabled Professional Framework](#)

The AI-Enabled Professional Framework

To cut through the hype and create a practical way to think about skills needed in an AI-transformed workplace, we partnered with leaders across industries and higher education to develop the AI-Enabled Professional Framework. This employer-validated and industry-agnostic framework gives companies and colleges a shared language for what it really means to be AI-ready, and, most importantly, gives a pathway to get talent there.



AI-Enabled Professional Competencies Framework © 2025 by Business-Higher Education Forum is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Informed by input from over a hundred cross-industry leaders, the AI-Enabled Professional Framework is the human and technical competencies people need to use AI thoughtfully, responsibly, and effectively in today's generative AI environment. The framework is designed to evolve as technology advances.



Connecticut's Tech Talent Accelerator (TTA)

TTA's structure catalyzes partnerships and sustains momentum.



- Designed as a 1-year "sprint" to incentivize higher education institutions to develop new pathways quickly
- Uses a competitive RFP process to select participating institutions
- Grounded in labor market data
- Promotes close collaboration with business
- Feedback loops with Employer-Led Regional Sector Partnerships
- Accountability through quarterly progress reports

Features a Community of Practice to:

- Provide technical assistance on partnership and credential design
- Build a network of peers dedicated to innovation and industry responsiveness

Tech Talent Accelerator: Round 1 Partnerships

Institution	Area of Focus	Industry Champions
Mitchell College	Professional technology skills	INscrD
Quinnipiac University	Cybersecurity for Healthcare	Help at Home, Vancord, Kyber Security, Cyber, IGT Gaming, Yale New Haven, Cornell-Scott Hill Medical, Clearwater Compliance, Cornell Weill Medical Center, ISC2CT Industry Group
University of Bridgeport	Cybersecurity for Finance & Technology	CYPROTECK Inc.
University of Hartford	Mobile App Development	Infosys
University of New Haven	Augmented/ Virtual Reality Modeling	SphereGen, Arsome Technology Group, Pleiadian Systems Corporation
University of Saint Joseph	Data Analytics & Business Intelligence	CGI

Tech Talent Accelerator: Round 2 Partnerships

In addition to those below, six institutions from Round 1 were awarded “booster grants” to expand on their work and participate in the second round of the initiative.

Institution	Area of Focus	Industry Champions
Albertus Magnus College	Applied Data Science for Bioinformatics	Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Charter Oak State College	Cybersecurity	Travelers
Connecticut College	Information Technology	Accenture
Fairfield University	Cybersecurity	Vancord
Southern Connecticut State University	Cloud Computing	Ancera
University of Connecticut - Stamford	Cloud Computing	Synchrony Financial

Results to date

13
New Pathways Developed
Such as cyber, mobile app development and cloud.

by
12
Higher Education Institutions

with
26
Industry Partners

256
Learners/Workers Enrolled
As of August 2024.

Additional Models

CASE STUDY: BUILDING CAPACITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Problem:

- Business and education struggle to establish and sustain high-performing partnerships even though collaboration paves the way for high-quality employment.

Solution:

- Faculty are leaders in industry-aligned programs but lack the technical collaboration skills and support to build solutions.
- The ECMC Foundation supports this work.

BHEF launched the Faculty Innovation Fellowship to empower faculty as champions of change



The fellowship provides selected faculty with the tools, skills, and peer mentor network to develop innovative practices that build equitable talent pipelines and increase student success. Higher education administrators are empowering their faculty to design, lead, and implement industry-responsive initiatives aligned with their campus needs and regional priorities.

- Developed innovative 10-month in-person and virtual curriculum focused on innovation, change management, and leadership skills
- Recruited cohort of 19 fellows who represent diverse disciplines from public state systems, community colleges, and independent universities—nearly half of which are minority-serving institutions
- At completion, each fellow will launch a novel project supported by their institutional leadership

CASE STUDY: PILOTING A NEW MODEL

Problem:

- Businesses struggle to keep employees' skills current with rapid changes in AI and emerging technologies
- Difficult for higher education to understand business skill needs

Solution:

- Create new model for higher education institutions to update offerings in an agile manner

BHEF was engaged to help an EdTech company develop an AI-powered marketplace.

Goals:

- Improve how employers **signal skill needs** to higher education
- Increase speed for higher ed to **identify skill gaps** and curriculum opportunities
- Create efficient ways for business and higher ed to partner on **upskilling and reskilling**

BHEF Activities:

- **Advised on business and higher education use cases**
- **Provided competency frameworks** to inform initial infrastructure design
- **Facilitated collaboration of 18 partner companies and universities**
- **Managed UI/UX testing design**, user recruitment, marketing, and feedback cycles
- **Launched model within one year** of development
- **Advised on business model development**, sustainability, and spin-off opportunities for additional AI services
- **Supported roll out to 3,000+ companies** and training partners via US Chamber of Commerce Foundation



Looking Ahead: Capturing the AI Wave

The Problem: Developing AI-Enabled Talent is Complex



The term “**AI**” has **different meanings** to different stakeholders.

- What is needed to help business and higher education **be on the same page** to collaborate on AI workforce issues?

Everybody needs AI to some degree, but not everyone needs the same AI skills.

- What are the **broad competencies** needed that are applicable **across diverse industries and occupations**?

Higher ed often turns to business to articulate skill needs, but many businesses are still navigating AI—creating opportunities for mutual learning.

- What is the **role for business and higher education** in ensuring learners and workers develop the competencies they need?

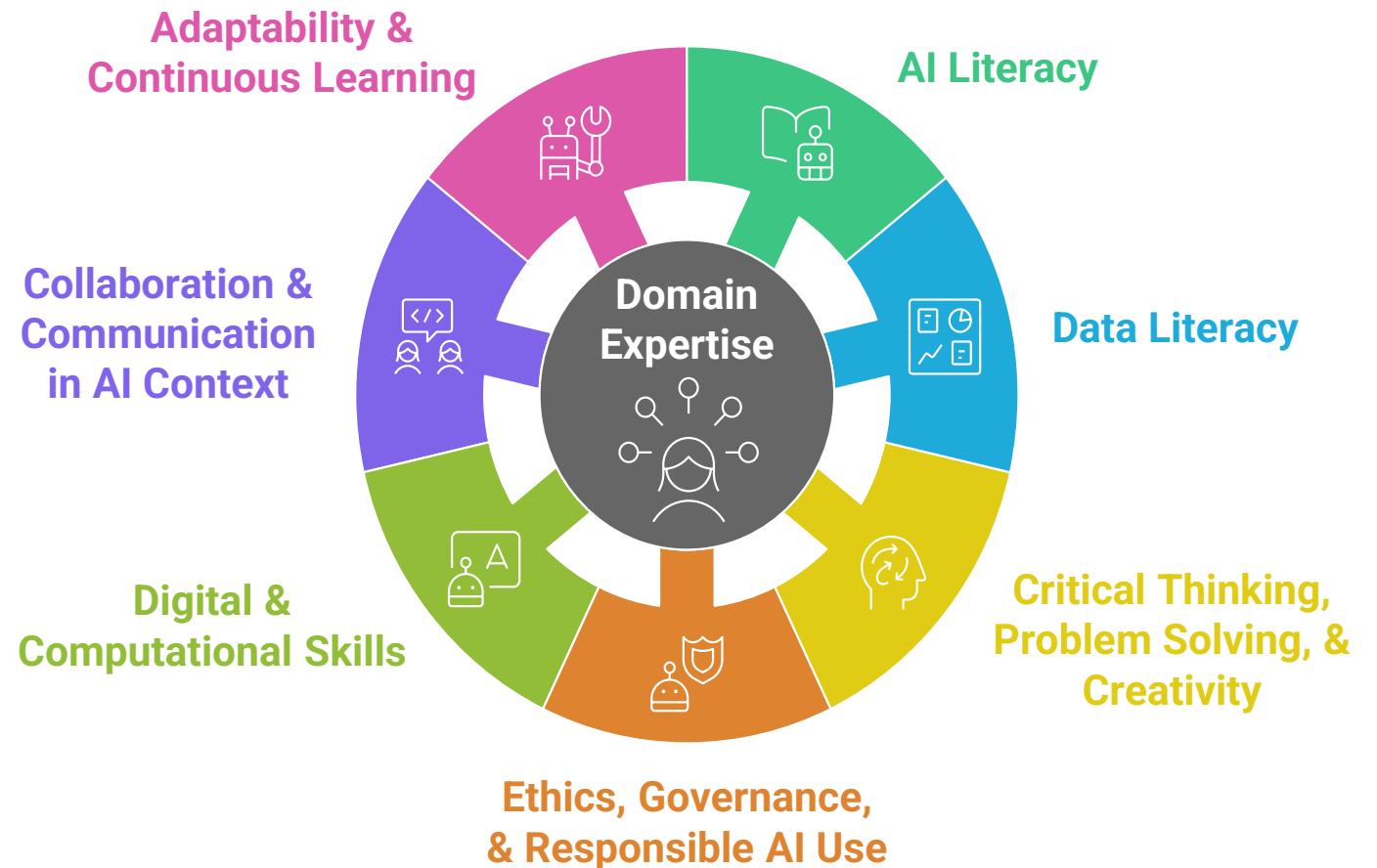
AI is **evolving at an unprecedented pace**. Even the most adaptive businesses and institutions are challenged to stay ahead of the curve.

- How can learners and workers **develop the muscle for lifelong learning** and to be constantly evolving?
- How can business and higher education **create the conditions to enable this**?

What Competencies Do AI-Enabled Professionals Need Across their Career Journeys?








AI is reshaping what professionals need to know, do, and become.

These seven core competencies evolve with your career – from entry-level roles to executive leadership.

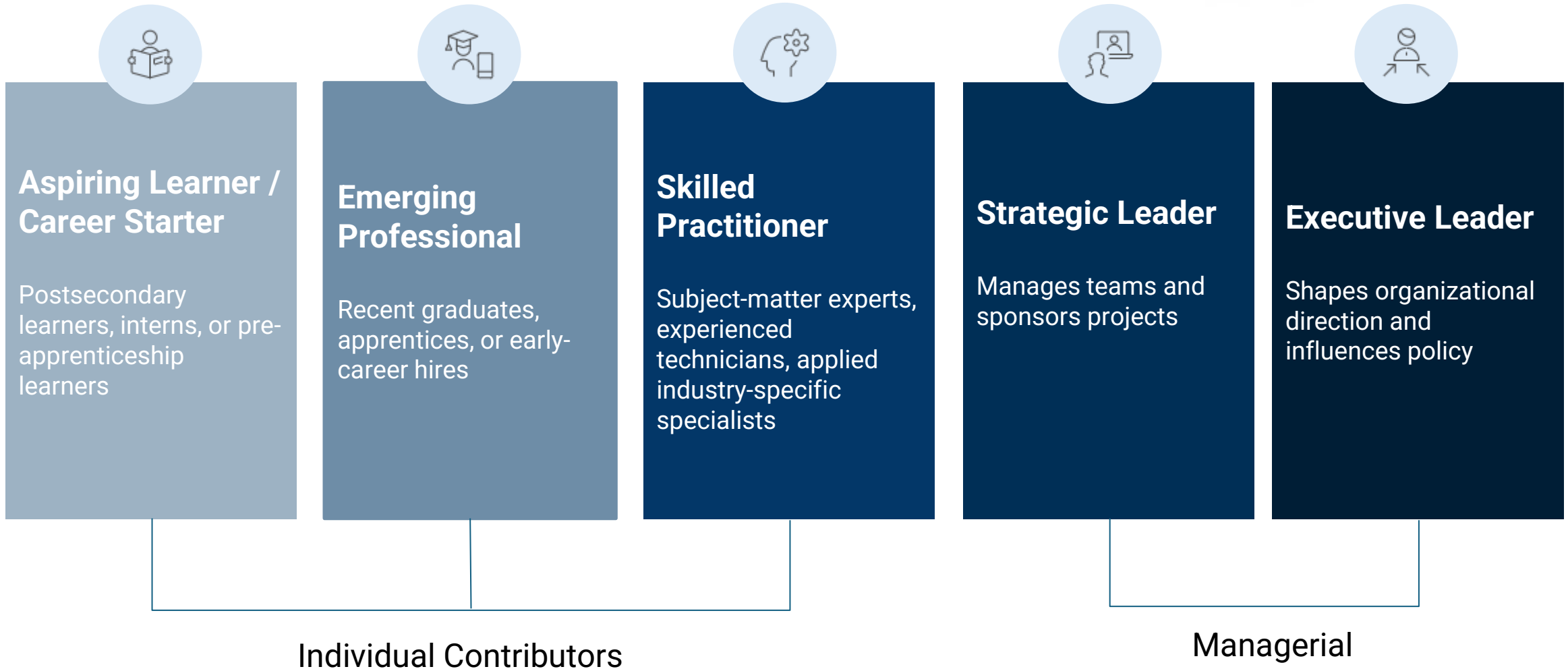


What Competencies Do AI-Enabled Professionals Need?










 AI Literacy	Understanding the core concepts and terminology of AI, including how AI models work and their capabilities.
 Data Literacy	The ability to interpret, manage, and work with data , including understanding how AI uses data to make decisions.
 Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving & Creativity	The ability to analyze AI-generated solutions , recognize potential risks, and apply logical thinking to solve problems.
 Ethics, Governance & Responsible AI Use	Understanding and applying principles of fairness, transparency, and privacy when working with AI.
 Digital & Computational Skills	The ability to work with digital tools , software, and AI-powered systems, including coding, automating workflows, prompt engineering, and designing AI-driven solutions.
 Collaboration & Communication in AI Context	The ability to work in multidisciplinary teams and communicate AI-related ideas effectively to both technical and non-technical stakeholders.
 Adaptability & Continuous Learning	The mindset and skills needed to stay up-to-date with AI advancements and continuously adapt to new AI technologies and methodologies.

Career Stages: Where you are in your career impacts how you use AI and what skill sets you need



What Competencies Do AI-Enabled Professionals Need at Different Stages of a Career?



COMPETENCY CATEGORY	ASPIRING LEARNER / CAREER STARTER	EMERGING PROFESSIONAL	SKILLED PRACTITIONER	STRATEGIC LEADER	EXECUTIVE LEADER
 AI Literacy	Understand basic AI concepts and terminology	Apply AI concepts to tasks; aware of emerging AI tools	Integrate AI into projects and workflows	Shape organizational AI adoption strategies	Guide enterprise-wide AI strategy and investments
 Data Literacy	Interpret basic data and visualizations	Use data insights for decisions; recognize bias	Manage and model data for AI insights	Oversee ethical and effective data use	Set data and AI governance frameworks
 Critical Thinking, Problem-solving, & Creativity	Question AI outputs; identify basic risks	Solve problems using AI tools under guidance	Independently select and deploy AI solutions	Lead AI-enabled complex problem-solving	Anticipate systemic AI challenges and opportunities
 Ethics, Governance & Responsible AI Use	Recognize ethical issues (bias, privacy)	Practice responsible AI use	Lead responsible AI initiatives in teams	Shape organizational responsible AI policies	Champion public and global responsible AI leadership
 Digital & Computational Skills	Use AI-powered applications; basic tech comfort	Modify and optimize workflows with AI	Integrate, manage, or build AI-enhanced tools	Drive AI-based digital transformation	Architect future-ready digital and AI ecosystems
 Collaboration & Communication In AI Context	Explain basic AI concepts to peers	Collaborate in AI-augmented teams	Lead multidisciplinary AI teams	Align AI messaging across business functions	Influence enterprise and public AI narratives
 Adaptability & Continuous Learning	Stay curious and open to AI trends	Experiment with new AI tools and methods	Advocate for AI learning among peers	Sponsor organizational AI learning initiatives	Lead industry-wide AI workforce development efforts

2025-2026 Network Initiatives



1. AI and the Future of Talent Collaborative

- Assess AI's impact on jobs, skills, and impacted sectors with industry and higher education
- Align higher education curricula to industry needs in preparing learners for real-world opportunities

AI Talent
Landscape
Report

National AI
Skills
Framework

2. Work-Integrated Learning Innovation Center

- Expand work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that engage sidelined talent and build effective talent pipeline
- Aggregate and promote best practices of WBL models to meet employer and learner needs to boost capacity, availability, and adoption

Employer
Case
Studies

Virtual
Learning
Series

WBL
Toolkits

3. Talent Competitiveness Accelerator for Regional Leaders

- Develop collaborative regional models for economic growth
- Provide tools, best practices, and technical assistance
- Link underrepresented talent to opportunities in high-demand roles:
 - AI
 - Energy
 - Green/blue economies
 - Cybersecurity

"Quick Takes"
Regional
Talent Brief

Member
Case
Studies

National
Talent
Convening