

Sequences to Success in Washington State

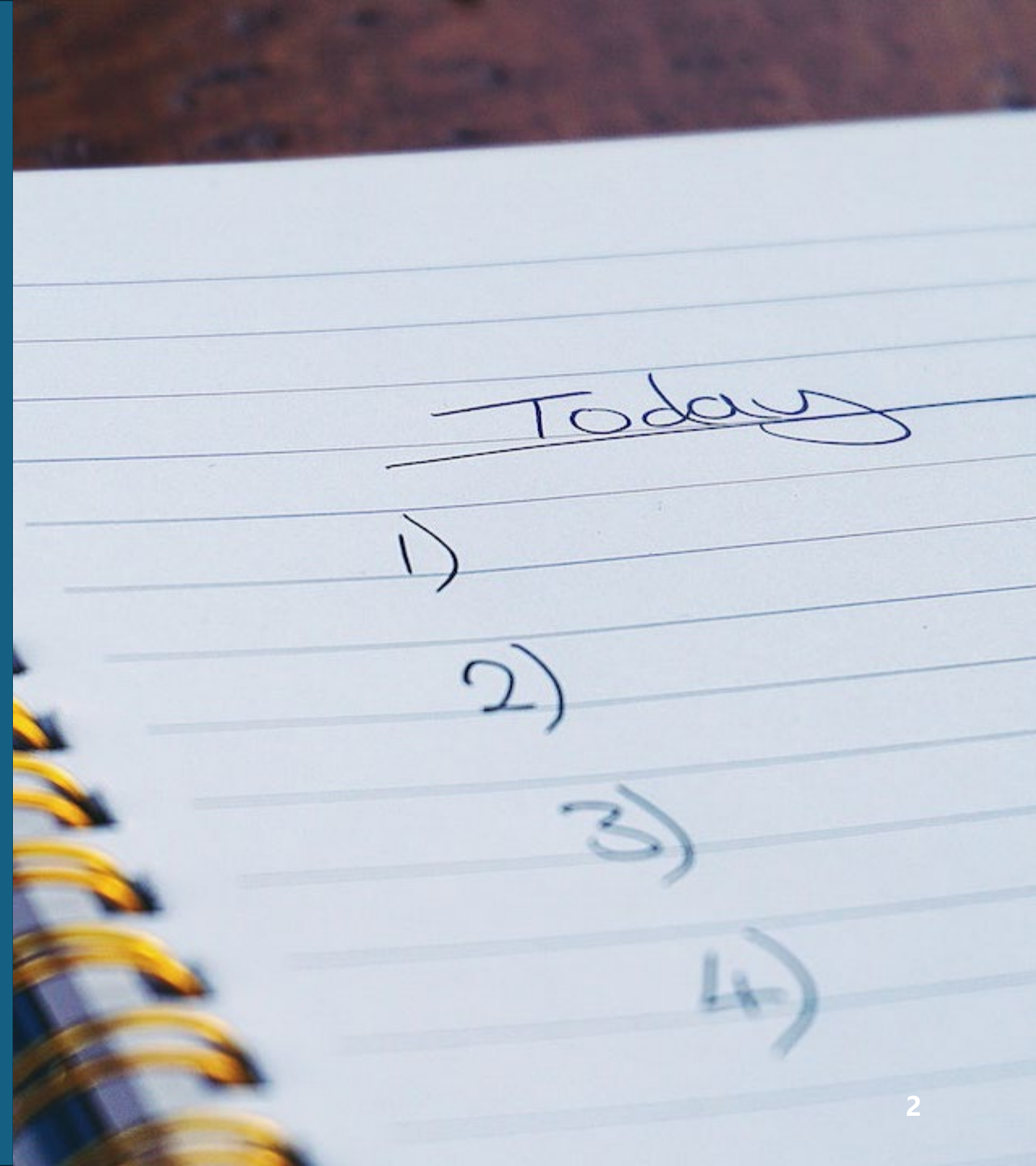
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Today's Agenda

- About MDRC
- Research Project Overview
- Research Implications



About MDRC

Social and Policy Research Organization



Celebrating 50th Anniversary This Year!

MDRC is headquartered in NYC with satellite offices in Oakland, LA, and D.C.



MDRC Policy Areas

Post-Secondary Education
Workforce Development
Economic Mobility
Families & Children
Criminal Justice



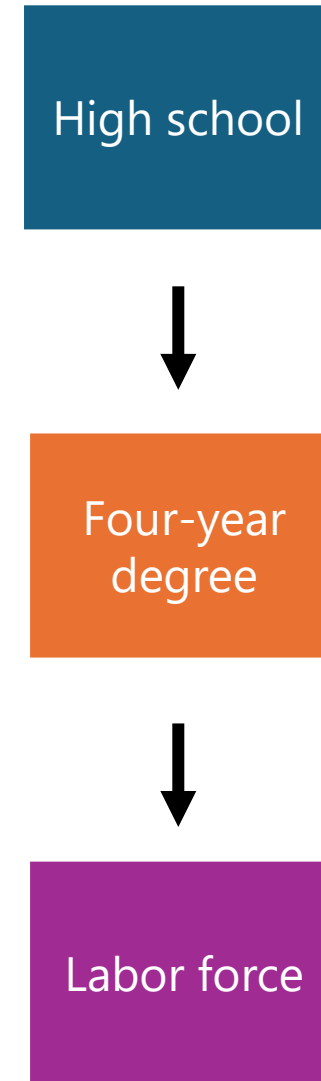
This project is housed in the Center for Data Insights (CDI)

CDI helps agencies, organizations, and localities build their capacity for using data to inform decision-making and improve service delivery to clients

Research Project Background

Lots of research focuses on “traditional” pathways: students graduating high school and going on to four-year degree programs.

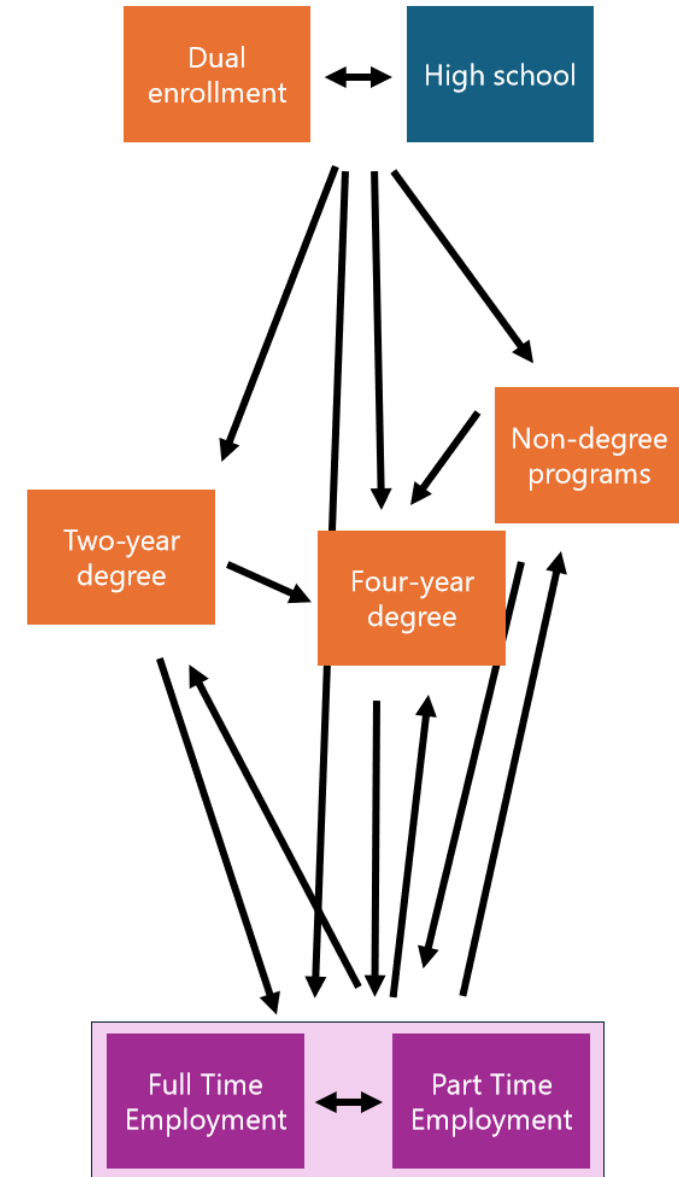
Four-year degrees are known to improve economic outcomes relative to not entering college or earning a two-year degree.



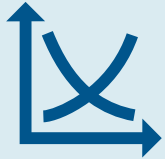
Research Project Background

Many students don't follow that pathway:

- Some students take gap years or enter a two-year college then transfer to a four-year.
- Some students stack a variety of credentials either with or without a degree.
- Some students are working while attending school.



Research Project: Questions



What are the range and variety of trajectories young adults take as they seek to transition from school to work?



Are there clusters of trajectories (i.e., pathways) that lead to better postsecondary education and labor market outcomes, including postsecondary degree attainment, higher earnings, and more stable employment?



How does participation in school-to-work pathways differ for key learner subgroups?



Do the economic returns of the identified pathways vary for key learner subgroups?

Research Questions

Key Learner Subgroups

- Students of color
- Rural students
- Male students
- Low-income students

Postsecondary education and labor market outcomes

- Degree attainment
- Credentialing attainment
- Annual earnings
- Hourly earnings
- Employment stability

Research Project: Questions



What are the differences in outcomes for students that participate in [ACADEMIC SUBGROUP] by various types/modes/dosage (as data availability allows)?

Academic Subgroups

Dual Enrollment:

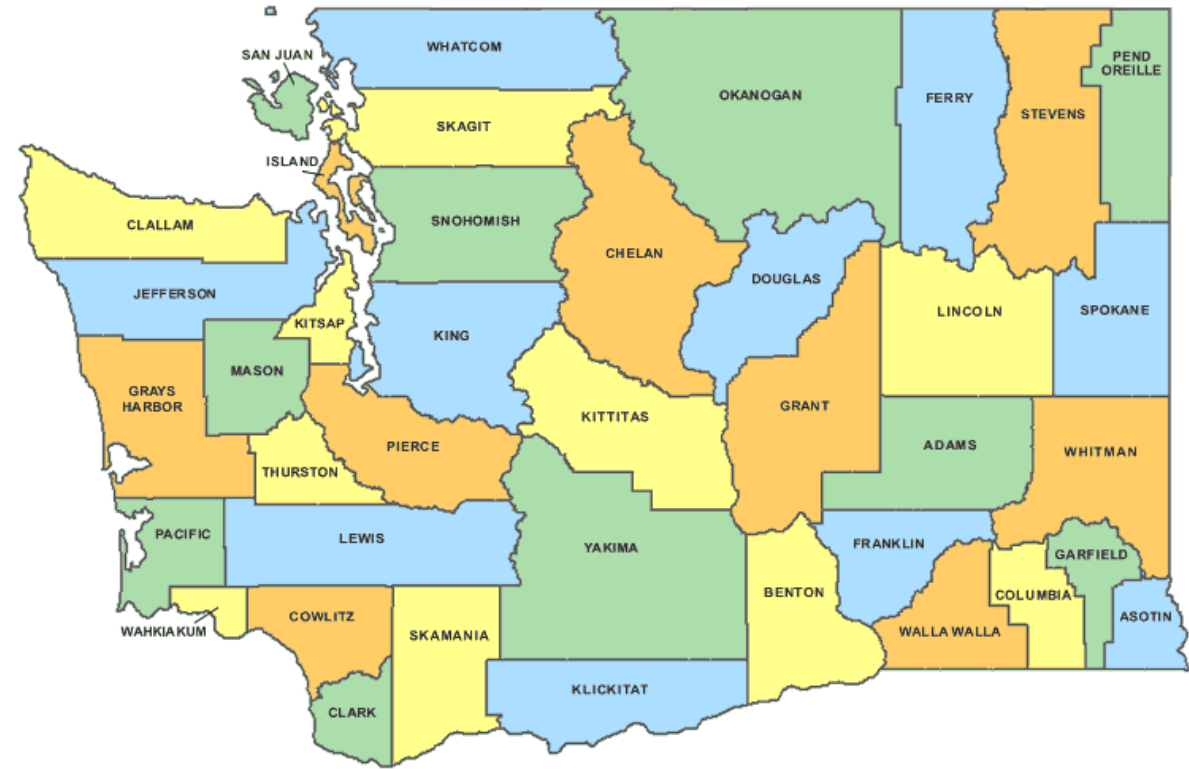
Includes courses taken by high school students for college and high school credit. These courses are taught at either a high school, career center, college or university.

Non-Degree:

Includes credit-bearing courses of study leading to sub-associate degree academic certificates, noncredit training leading to industry credentials, and occupational/professional licensure

Research Project: Design

P20W longitudinal data system track individuals' educational journeys from preschool through workforce participation across Washington State



Research Project: Design

Our project will quantify students' trajectories starting at their intended date of high school graduation.

Student's trajectories are categorized into one of a series of states every quarter through the end of the study period.

These states include several levels of enrollment and employment variables.

States:



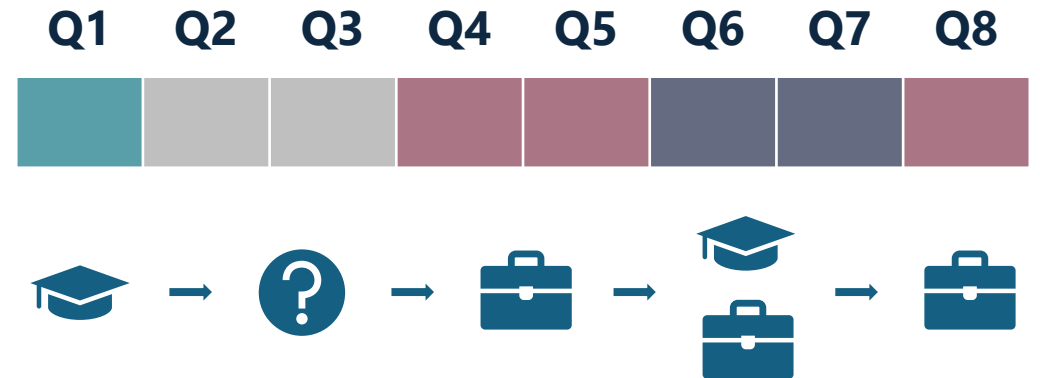
Enrolled (high school, associates, bachelor, non-degree seeking, advanced ed., etc.)



Employed (full-time, part-time, high-pay, medium-pay, low-pay, etc.)



Neither



Research Project: Design

Sequence analysis lets us group similar trajectories together, into overall pathways.

We then assess outcomes for each of the main pathways identified.

Trajectories



Clusters

Pathway A



Pathway B



Pathway C



Research Project: Design

- If resources allow, MDRC and WSAC will conduct focus groups with students and program administrators. These interviews will provide insights into students' motivations for pursuing dual enrollment and non-degree courses, whether these courses informed their choice of pathway, and whether they increased their ability to achieve their career goals.

Research Implications

Research findings and products will allow:

- Understanding of trajectory frequency for policy makers
- Actionable insights for guidance counselors, practitioners, students, and families
- Increased analytic capacity for state agencies





Thank You!

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