



## CALL TO ACTION

On August 31, 2023, Governor Newsom signed an [Executive Order](#) calling for a Master Plan for Career Education. It outlines the goal of integrating statewide systems “to allow each individual, whether through a bachelor’s degree or other educational or training program, to obtain the skills and experience necessary to pursue a good paying career within diverse sectors of our economy, and to connect individuals with employers hiring for those skills.” A core component of this integration is to update “academic transcripts that reflect skills and competency-based learning, as well as learning that occurs outside traditional academic settings.” In the “Freedom to Succeed” [press release](#) accompanying this Executive Order, the Governor further urges the state of California to focus on “removing barriers to employment for diverse communities...and removing silos and increasing connection between education systems and the workforce.”

At the same time, [California Education Code Section 10860](#) directs the California Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C) to provide expanded access to tools and services that support the navigation of the education-to-employment pipeline. Education Code [Section 108061](#) identified [eTranscript California](#) as a tool that could be leveraged to streamline the exchange of transcripts between postsecondary institutions, share information on dual enrollment between K-12 and postsecondary, provide students with verified coursework for eligibility and advising tools, and expand the types of records that can be included on transcripts.

## PROBLEMS TO SOLVE: DOCUMENTING LEARNING FOR ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

**Inconsistencies in how community colleges format, deliver, and charge students for transcripts often delays admissions decisions and may result in students not receiving credit for classes they have completed.**

# Expanding eTranscript CA and Building a Career Passport

Because eTranscript California is [inconsistently implemented](#) across the state, colleges put the burden on students to understand all the permutations that may apply to their academic records, and on receiving institutions to juggle a variety of incoming data formats and processes. Students applying for college admission who have completed dual enrollment coursework often don't know that they must separately request and submit their community college transcripts. They also may not know whether those courses can be applied to specific majors once they are accepted. To be most effective, transcript requests should be embedded within admissions applications and transcripts should be delivered in a uniform data standard that supports an equitable, efficient review of a student's coursework that expedites eligibility and articulation decisions.

**Students have incomplete information, preventing effective use of college advising tools like [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#) and the CSU Transfer Planner.**

California is expanding access to electronic planning tools that support students to prepare for college and transfer. [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#), when backed by verified coursework data through K12 transcript exchanges, supports high school students in determining their eligibility for UC and CSU admission. In addition, as part of the Transfer Success Pathway program, the [CSU Transfer Planner](#) supports transfer-directed students to self-identify community college courses they have already taken, to determine which of these courses are transferable and whether they can be applied toward specific majors at individual CSU campuses. By integrating eTranscript California with tools like [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#) and the CSU Transfer Planner, students can shift from a self-reported process to one that utilizes up-to-date, verified community college coursework (including dual enrollment courses) to track their progress toward their college admission and transfer goals.

**While people build skills that are relevant for certificates and degrees through a variety of contexts, there are few mechanisms for capturing their learning experiences and competencies so they can accelerate completion of academic programs.**

Currently, the majority of living wage jobs in California [require a degree](#). However, only [a third of adults](#) have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and a [disproportionate share](#) of adults of color have no postsecondary credentials at all. Nevertheless, individual learners can, and do,

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participate in learning, training, and skill-building activities outside of formal education that could be aligned to academic programs if there was a mechanism for documenting those skills.

For example, an experienced home daycare provider who took early childhood education classes at an adult school could count those classes and experience toward a preschool teacher degree. Or, a veteran who built healthcare skills as a field medic could share a certification offered by the military to fulfill eligibility requirements for a nursing program. Similarly, a recently unemployed oil worker with deep knowledge of simulation tools could document his skills and have them apply towards a mechatronic degree.

## PROBLEMS TO SOLVE: DOCUMENTING LEARNING FOR EMPLOYMENT

**There is a growing narrative that degrees are not necessary for good jobs, but few employers have mechanisms to hire staff without skills verification tools.**

In addition to helping experienced workers attain academic credit for their skills, many have high hopes that degrees will become less crucial for living wage jobs as employers turn to skills-based hiring. However, as the [Society for Human Resources Management](#) explains, skills-based hiring is still in its infancy. “Hiring for skills will require a mindset shift in which candidates are ‘screened in’ instead of ‘screened out,’ necessitating new ways to define roles, write job ads, evaluate candidates, manage performance, and develop employees.” As a bridge between traditional forms of hiring and skills-based approaches, California could provide employers with information on qualifications using digital data, such as certificates and badges.

## DESIGNING SOLUTIONS

A number of states are seeking to address the needs for better documentation of skills in the context of both academics and work, which are often referred to as Learning and Employment Record (LER) systems. The [National Governors Association](#) defines LERs as “digital resumes with secure, verifiable, and readily accessible records of people’s skills, educational experiences, and work histories.”

# Expanding eTranscript CA and Building a Career Passport

Although each state is taking its own approach to this process, there is consensus that creating LERs:

- requires alignment across multiple systems to ensure education institutions are developing competency-based curriculum
- workforce organizations are providing skills training resources
- employers are expanding their recruitment and hiring practices
- technology platforms--whether they are managed by public organizations or through a network of private vendors--are able to create a seamless exchange of data that encompasses traditional academic and "lived experience" records

Over the upcoming series of Task Force meetings, each of the problems described above will be explored in more detail and Task Force members will develop recommendations that will be incorporated into the Master Plan for Career Education. Topics will include:

- **February:** Dual Enrollment and Application Integration
- **March:** Advising Tools
- **April:** Credit for Prior Learning
- **May:** Competency-Based Education, Workforce Training, Digital Credentials/Badges
- **June:** Master Plan Recommendations

To help visualize how these elements are interconnected, we will be utilizing the eTranscript California and Career Passport Map as a focal point at each upcoming meeting.

