

# Informing the California Career Passport

A national scan of skills-based  
hiring technology ecosystems

In partnership with WestEd's Center for  
Economic Mobility



## WHERE WE'RE COMING FROM

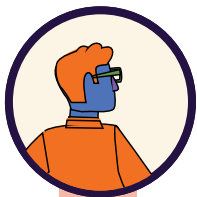
In 2024, the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data (C2C) convened a task force to better understand how existing systems, including eTranscript California and the Mapping Articulated Pathways (MAP) program, could be used to build a Career Passport: an integrated Learning and Employment Record (LER) ecosystem designed to help job seekers find work.

In 2025, C2C convened a Planning Committee to explore implementation options for the Career Passport. The Committee conducted an environmental scan of existing LER implementations—including Accelerate Montana, Alabama Talent Triad, Arkansas LAUNCH, ASU Pocket, ColoradoFWD, MyCareerForward in Pittsburgh, and the WGU/Indiana Achievement Wallet—and interviewed national leaders from the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), National Governors Association, SkillsFWD, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and Walmart.org.

This report summarizes the findings from the environmental scan. It is intended to serve as a reference guide for other state entities embarking on building their own skills-based hiring technology ecosystem.

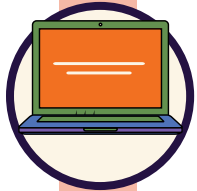
## WHAT WE LEARNED

These key themes emerged from the research:



### Governance

LER implementers tend to adopt one of three governance models: large statewide projects with policy and funding backing; projects led by higher education institutions with an emphasis on their own student population; and hybrid approaches bridging higher education and other partners.



### Development

While implementations range from homegrown custom builds to vendor-led engagements, all implementers emphasized the importance of iterating based on ongoing feedback from users.



### Interoperability

Interoperability is a core design goal for all projects, but without universal mandates, adoption of common data standards, including 1EdTech's Comprehensive Learner Record and the HR Open Standards Consortium Learner and Employment Record Resume Standard, remains a challenge.



### Use cases

Some implementations start by prioritizing learner and worker use cases (the "supply side") and then transition to engaging employers (the "demand side"), while others start with employer needs. All implementations tend to be grounded in local needs, existing employer partnerships, and specific user groups.



### Evaluation

Implementers have explored different ways to gather feedback, including direct data collection from users and employers within the LER interface. Linking tool-level feedback to broader employment outcomes remains a critical challenge.

## WHERE WE'RE GOING

The implementation projects we studied were some of the first to demonstrate LER capabilities at scale. As these projects continue to grow and evolve, new use cases and challenges are emerging for LER implementers to address. The findings from this report point to a shift from experimentation to system-building, where long-term success will depend on governance, alignment, and sustained adoption, not just technology. Several forces are shaping this transition.

Highly capable artificial intelligence (AI) systems are able to generate credible resumes and learner artifacts on demand, raising the salience of verifiable credentials as a trust layer<sup>1</sup> and even prompting the invention of new credential types, such as personhood credentials, for identity verification.<sup>2</sup> AI is also driving uncertainty about the durability of educational investments and future alignment between skills and labor market demand.

Interoperability and data infrastructure will be critical. Fragmented systems and inconsistent standards adoption remain significant barriers. States can play a key role in advancing shared frameworks, encouraging standards adoption, and integrating LERs into broader data ecosystems.

In addition, governance and sustainability will determine whether efforts scale. Projects with clear policy support, stable funding, and cross-sector coordination are better positioned for long-term success. The T3 Innovation Network's New Data Paradigm, for example, sees integration with LERs as a key pillar in a broader data governance and standardization framework linking education and employment data sources to governmental reporting requirements and learner and worker needs.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, scaling impact will require deeper employer integration. While many efforts have focused on learners, broader adoption depends on embedding LER data into hiring systems and workflows. This will require aligning skills language, reducing technical and legal barriers, and demonstrating clear value to employers.

Finally, the field must strengthen how it measures success. Moving forward, more intentional approaches to data collection, employer feedback, and outcome tracking will be needed to link LER adoption to employment outcomes.

Taken together, these trends suggest an inflection point in the LER ecosystem. To sustain this momentum, implementers should carefully observe the governance and technical lessons learned from early adopters and design for long-term sustainability.

## THE CALIFORNIA CAREER PASSPORT

The California Career Passport Platform is a response to Governor Newsom's Master Plan for Career Education, which calls for a mechanism that enables people to attain well-paid work by ensuring that skills built through apprenticeships, industry credentials, military service, noncredit programs, and work experience can be recognized by employers and colleges alike.

Led by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, in partnership with the Labor and Workforce development Agency, C2C, and other state partners, Career Passport will provide Californians with a secure, learner-controlled digital tool that displays their verifiable academic records, licenses, industry credentials, badges, and military service. This will give employers a fuller picture of what Californians know and can do, and open opportunity to workers whose skills and experience extend beyond any single credential.

<sup>1</sup> "The Learning and Employment Record Ecosystem." SmartResume. Accessed May 7, 2026. <https://www.smartresume.com/about/learning-and-employment>

<sup>2</sup> "CA DMV WALLET." State of California DMV. Accessed May 7, 2026. <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/ca-dmv-wallet/>

<sup>3</sup> "Personhood credentials: Artificial intelligence and the value of privacy-preserving tools to distinguish who is real online." Accessed May 7, 2026. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2408.07892>

<sup>4</sup> "The New Data Paradigm." U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Accessed May 7, 2026. <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/workforce/the-new-data-paradigm-empowering-learners-and-workers-in-skills-based-data-driven-talent-markets>