



**CONCEPT**

**Micro-Pathways:** Two or more stackable credentials that lead to jobs in high-growth sectors and a path to a degree ([Education Design Lab](#)).

**INSIGHT**

Micro-pathways are optimally tailored to help adult learners quickly achieve their education, training, and work goals. Visible pathways are key.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL INSIGHTS

**MICRO-PATHWAYS**

# THE ALAMO COLLEGES STORY

**OPPORTUNITY** CLEAR PATHWAYS TO HIGH-DEMAND JOBS

Alamo Colleges had begun developing micro-credentials and digital badges. However, this was just the first step. We had to find a way to connect learners earning these credentials to jobs and continued education in order to support upward mobility.

**PIVOT** DEVELOP MICRO-PATHWAYS

Education Design Lab introduced Alamo Colleges to micro-pathways through its [Community College Growth Engine Fund](#). Micro-pathways are strategically designed for working learners and the changing economy. These pathways were just what our target populations needed.

Visibility for our learners was a driving force of this work. We realized that if we didn't create these pathways and make them visible, adult learners would not easily see the career progression opportunities from one micro-credential to the next. Developing micro-pathways would also help us bridge the non-credit to credit divide in our colleges and create a better experience for learners.

**MICRO-PATHWAYS** STRUCTURED FOR WORKING LEARNERS

Micro-pathways at Alamo Colleges consist of the following elements, each of which is critical to ensuring a successful experience for learners:



**2+ CREDENTIALS**



**TECHNICAL + MARKETABLE SKILLS**



**COMPLETED IN SIX MONTHS OR LESS**

The 2+ credentials form the base of the pathway. Each credential consists of a high-value short-term program that is delivered in a flexible format based on the learners' needs. Including both technical and marketable skills in the micro-pathway ensures learners are job-ready for the first job with all the competencies employers are seeking. The first 2+ credentials are designed to be completed in six months or less, as adult learners need accelerated options to quickly get to the job and career they are seeking.



Credentials are stackable and portable, allowing for multiple on-ramps and off-ramps. This enables learners to engage in education and training in a way that allows them to balance work and life responsibilities. Each micro-pathway is designed to lead to a job that provides a family-sustaining wage and educational benefits. Micro-pathways support upward mobility through alignment to the six career-focused **Alamo Institutes** and through a continued pathway that leads to a degree.

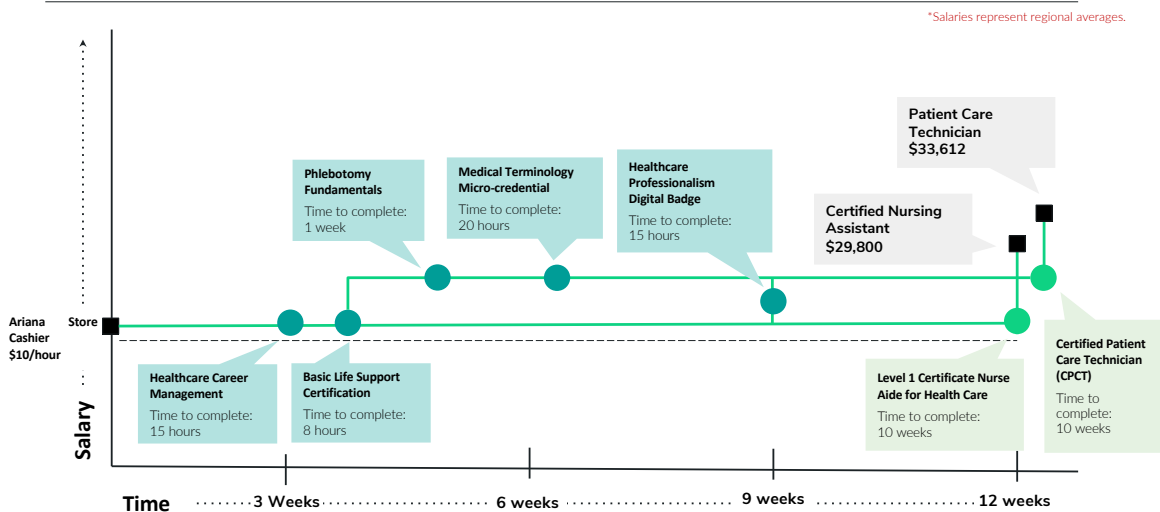


Micro-pathways are based on employer needs. Employers contribute to designing these pathways and confirming that each pathway is aligned to the regional labor market. Alamo Colleges developed industry specific micro-credentials for industry specific micro-pathways. Each credential is digitally discoverable, enabling learners to share validation of their skills with prospective employers.

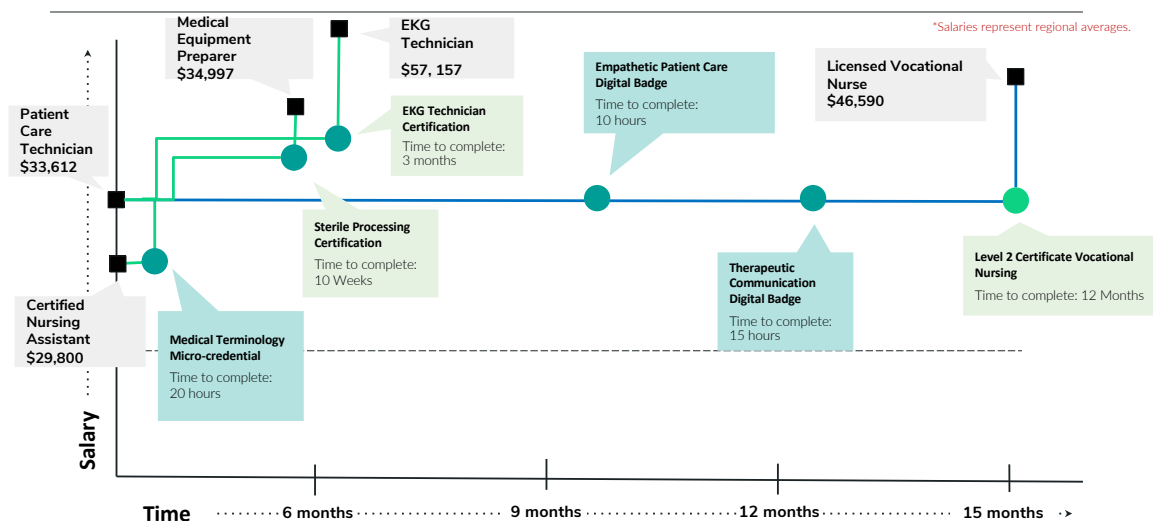
## PROTOTYPES HEALTHCARE MICRO-PATHWAYS

Alamo Colleges developed prototypes for direct patient care and diagnostic care. Information gathered from two large local Chambers of Commerce indicated the need to further socialize these micro-pathways with employers. Prototypes served as a conversation starter with local employers about the benefits of making paths to career entry and progression visible. Employers want to retain their talent. A visible career progression is one strategy to advance talent retention goals.

### Example: Nursing | Micro-pathway [0 - 3 months]



## Example: Nursing | Micro-pathway [3 - 15 months]



## HOW TO IMPLEMENT MICRO-PATHWAYS

1. Assess labor market needs.
2. Engage internal College partners.
3. Engage employer partners.
4. Understand target population.
5. Gain internal buy-in.
6. Identify the pathway.
7. Create micro-credentials.
8. Display the micro-pathway and process for students.
9. Develop seamless and supported pathways.
10. Tell learners that these pathways exist.



ALAMO  
COLLEGES  
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