

# Admission

[bellwether.org/beta/admission](https://bellwether.org/beta/admission)

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# Self-Reflection

- 1. What did you choose as your postsecondary pathway?** What were your postsecondary pathway **options**? Were they broad or limited?
- 2. Why did you choose** that postsecondary pathway? What were your interests, priorities, and/or constraints?
- 3. What information** did you have when choosing your pathway? Looking back, what information do you *wish* you had had?
- 4. Where did you get support** in choosing your postsecondary pathway? What social capital and navigation resources did you have in making your choice (e.g., formal navigation advising or informal via family, peers, teachers, community)?



Bellwether envisions a future where *all* young people have access to an **equitable and excellent education and live lives filled with opportunity.**

We serve clients in early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and workforce. Clients include district, charter, and private school systems, nonprofits, higher education institutions, philanthropies, research institutions, and government.

# Beta<sup>✦</sup>

BY BELLWETHER

A policy-practice innovative hub designed  
to interrupt inertia and jump-start action



# Our Starting Challenge

How do we build a more effective and equitable system of postsecondary pathways in the United States?

# How are we differentiating between a **postsecondary pathway** and a **higher education degree**?

- We define a **higher education degree** as a conventional two- or four-year degree coming from one of the approximately 3,900+ public nonprofit, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions classically offering accredited degrees.
- We define **postsecondary pathways** to include a broader universe of units of postsecondary value that include not only conventional two- and four-year degrees, but also credentials, certificates, badges, assessments, apprenticeships, licensures, portfolios, etc. This definition includes a broader array of providers beyond colleges and universities, such as nonprofits, non-college for-profits, government, and employers.

# Some starting observations on information/data.

There is an **incredible amount of information** on postsecondary pathways. But this information can be **hard to understand** and still does not always present a **complete and clear picture**.

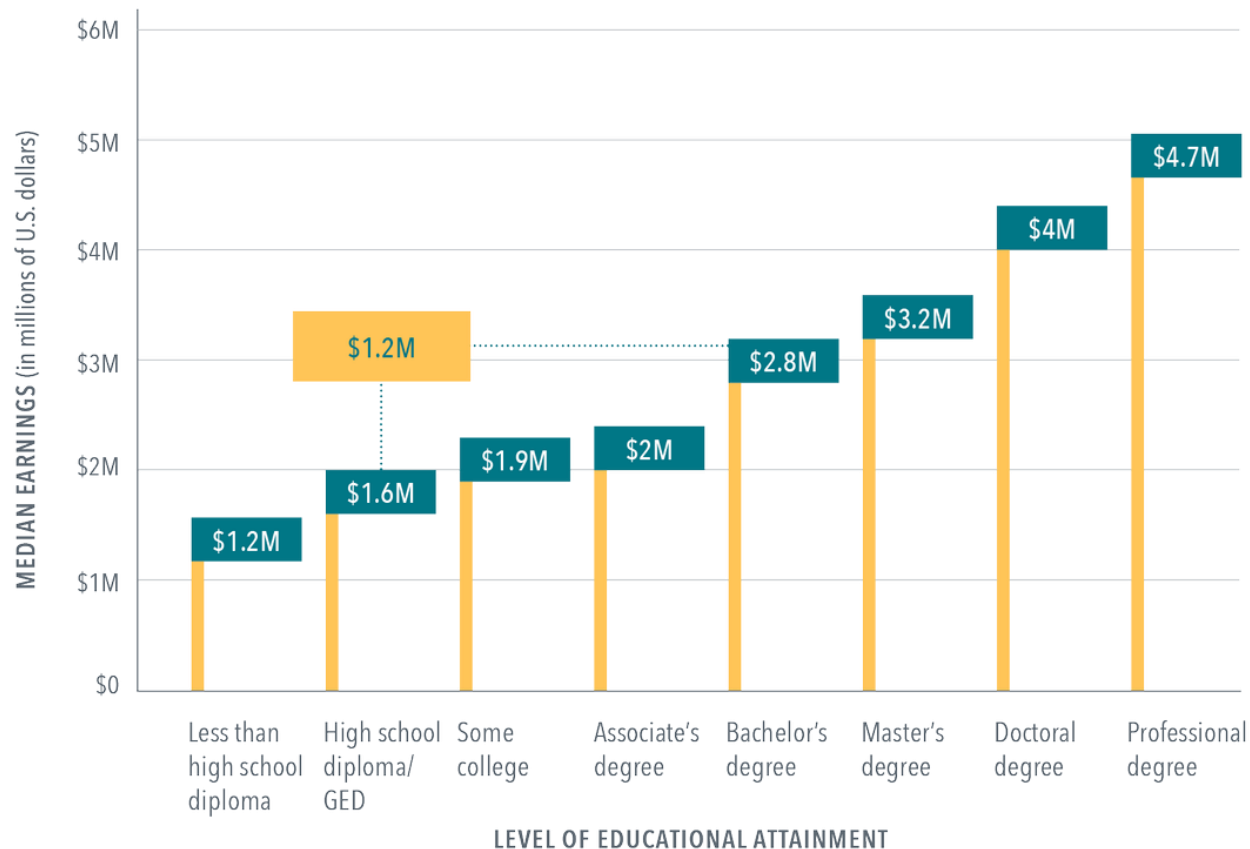
The **information that follows is what we found the most rigorous, clear, and compelling**. We are grateful to those who have assembled and researched this information. We also know it's not the full universe of information.

- Some information is **not transparent about what it includes and/or excludes** – like sticker cost versus net cost, and even which types of costs are included in either (e.g., room versus board versus fees; textbooks versus living expenses).
- An information source can be an **aggregation of other sources** – but that is not always explained, nor is its **collection methodology** (such as self-reported information or information gained via student surveys).
- Most information sources **have (sometimes significant) limitations** – and those limitations are **frequently not explained** to people using the information.
- A lot of information is **not disaggregated** by race/ethnicity, income, and/or gender.
- The **time frame** covered by an information set is not always clear.
- **New information** is constantly being released.
- There is **misinformation** about information on information.
- **As political conditions change**, the availability of information changes.

If it is this complicated for those of us who spend our time professionally in this space to sift through information, think of how overwhelming it can be for postsecondary pathway consumers.

Four-year conventional college degrees do (population-wide) produce a sizable lifetime increase in earnings.

### Median Individual Lifetime Earnings Increase by Educational Attainment in U.S.

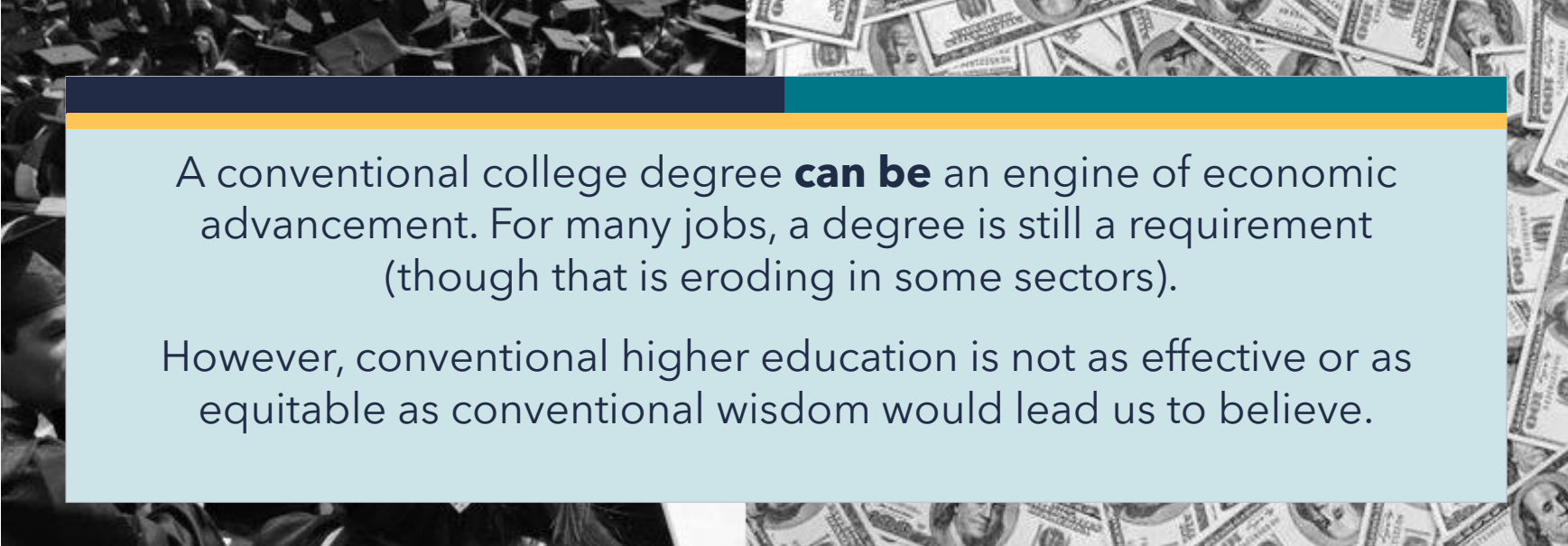




So, given the impact on lifetime earnings, a conventional college education is nothing but a good thing, right?



So, given the impact on lifetime earnings, a conventional college education is nothing but a good thing, right?



A conventional college degree **can be** an engine of economic advancement. For many jobs, a degree is still a requirement (though that is eroding in some sectors).

However, conventional higher education is not as effective or as equitable as conventional wisdom would lead us to believe.




# An Admission

**ad·mis·sion** /əd'mɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun*

- The process or fact of entering or being allowed to enter a place, organization, or institution.
- A statement acknowledging the truth of something.

We market pursuing a traditional college degree as a crucial investment.

But for many people, particularly those from systemically marginalized communities, it is really a high-stakes gamble.

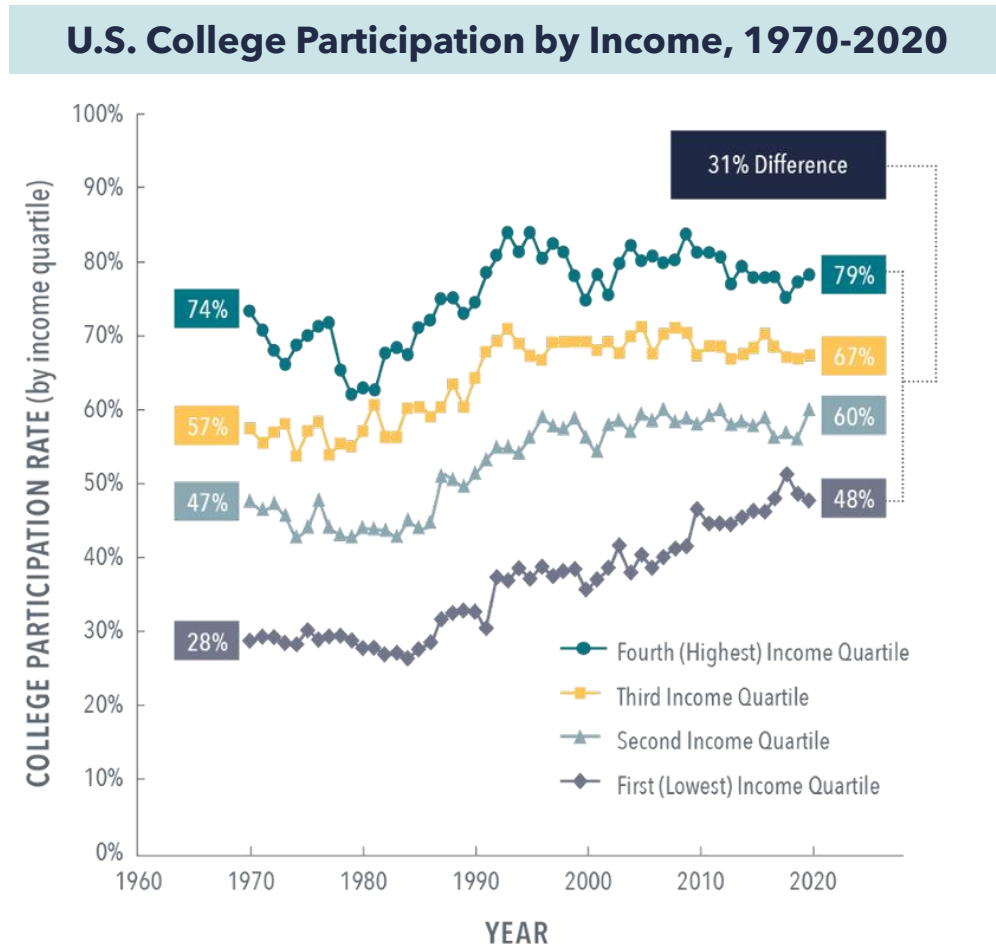




# Our postsecondary education system faces three challenges:

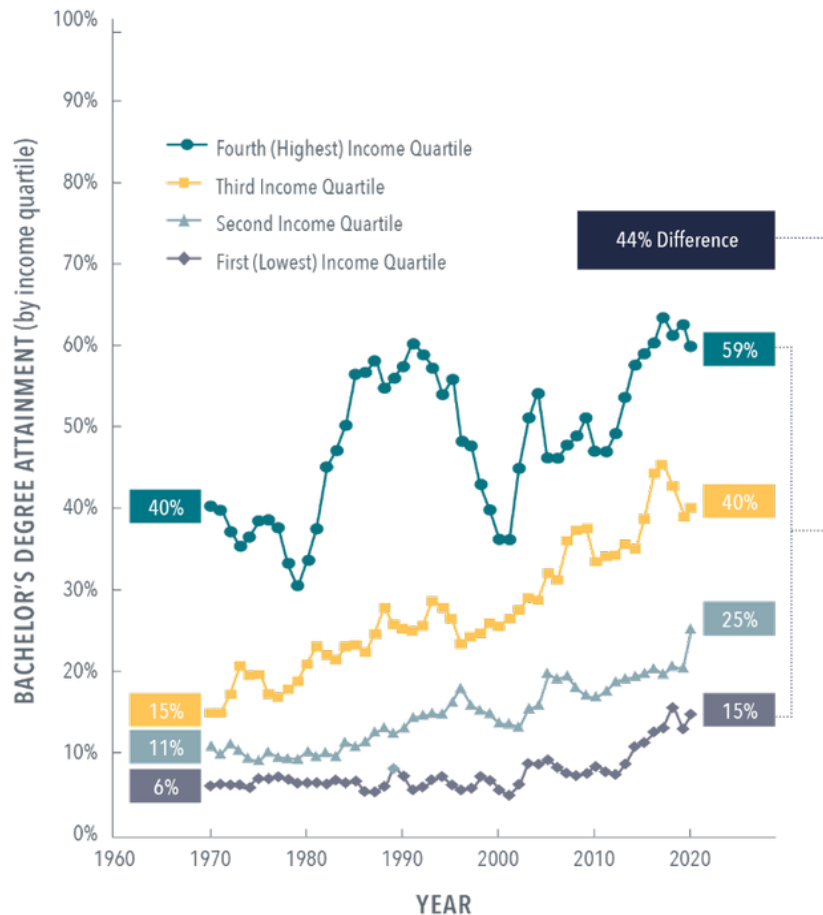
1. Inequitable completion rates.
2. Variable and opaque value from completing a pathway.
3. Overwhelming cost and debt.

There are significant disparities in who can access a postsecondary pathway (in this case, two- and four-year degrees).



There are significant disparities in who completes a postsecondary pathway.

**U.S. Bachelor's Degree Attainment, By Income, 1970-2020**



Demographic	Rates of degree attainment	
Hispanic	22%	
Black	26%	
White	36%	
Postsecondary Attainment	First-gen	Continuing-gen
Bachelor's degree	20%	49%
Certificate or associate's degree	24%	11%
No credential	56%	40%

**Source:** "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the US: Historical Trend Report," Pell Institute, 2022, National Center for Education Statistics, and Center for First-Generation Student Success.

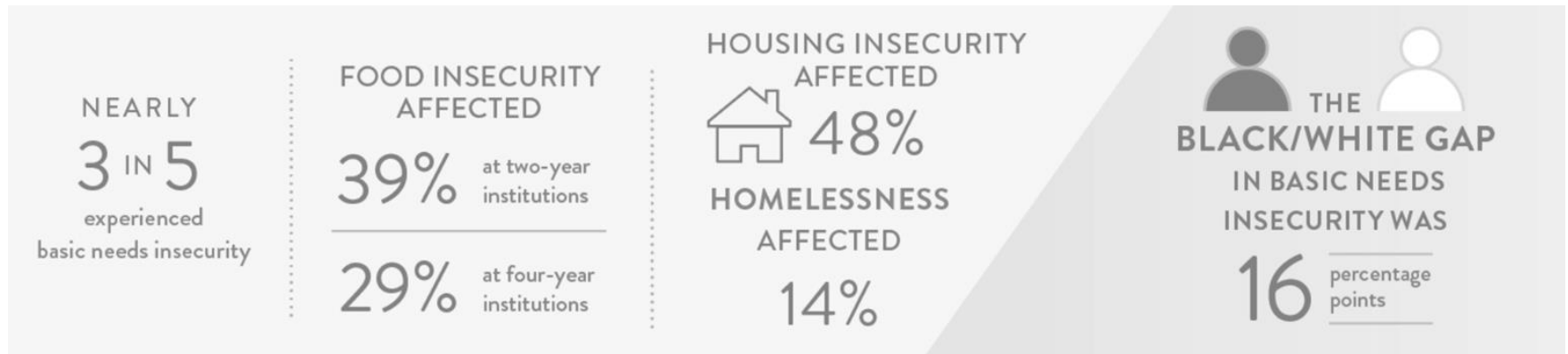
Much of our conventional postsecondary system is designed for a definition of “traditional” that is outdated at best and elitist at worst.

% of college students who are considered nontraditional	<b>74%</b>
% who work	<b>64%</b> <b>(40% full time)</b>
% who are parents	<b>22%</b>
% who live on a conventional college campus	<b>16%</b>

**The definition of a nontraditional student is someone who has one or more of the following attributes:**

- Enrolling one or more years after high school.
- Enrolling less than full time in college.
- Enrolling after completing a GED versus a conventional high school diploma.
- Being a parent.
- Working full time.
- Being classified as financially independent.

Many of these students navigate significant life challenges to complete a postsecondary pathway.



**13% of students surveyed had lost a loved one to COVID-19, with Hispanic students more than twice as likely as white peers to have had a loved one die.**

If we want a postsecondary system that helps people advance out of poverty, we have to design a system that supports them while they are living in it.





# Our postsecondary education system faces three challenges:

1. Inequitable completion rates.

2. Variable and opaque value from completing a pathway.

3. Overwhelming cost and debt.

There are significant disparities in the return on investment (ROI) of postsecondary pathways.

### Estimated Number of Years to Recoup Net Cost

Programs						
Years	0-5	5-10	10-20	20+	NO ROI	Total #
Bachelor's degree-granting	41%	24%	14%	11%	10%	25,691
Associate's degree-granting	64%	7%	4%	4%	21%	7,882
Certificate-granting	48%	4%	2%	3%	42%	4,524
Students in this set of programs						
Years	0-5	5-10	10-20	20+	NO ROI	Total #
Bachelor's	51%	24%	13%	8%	5%	1,483,844
Associate's	58%	9%	6%	6%	21%	361,381
Certificate	34%	6%	3%	5%	53%	373,126

There are a significant number of pathways that have a positive ROI within 10 years (and many within five years).

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There are also many pathways that take 10+ years to break even (if ever).

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➡ 35%

➡ 29%

➡ 47%

➡ 26%

➡ 33%

➡ 61%

This translates into millions of students who have a long timeline to break even (if ever).

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~4.3M students (out of 15.1M bachelor's and associate's degree-seeking undergraduates) will not achieve a positive ROI in 10+ years (if ever).

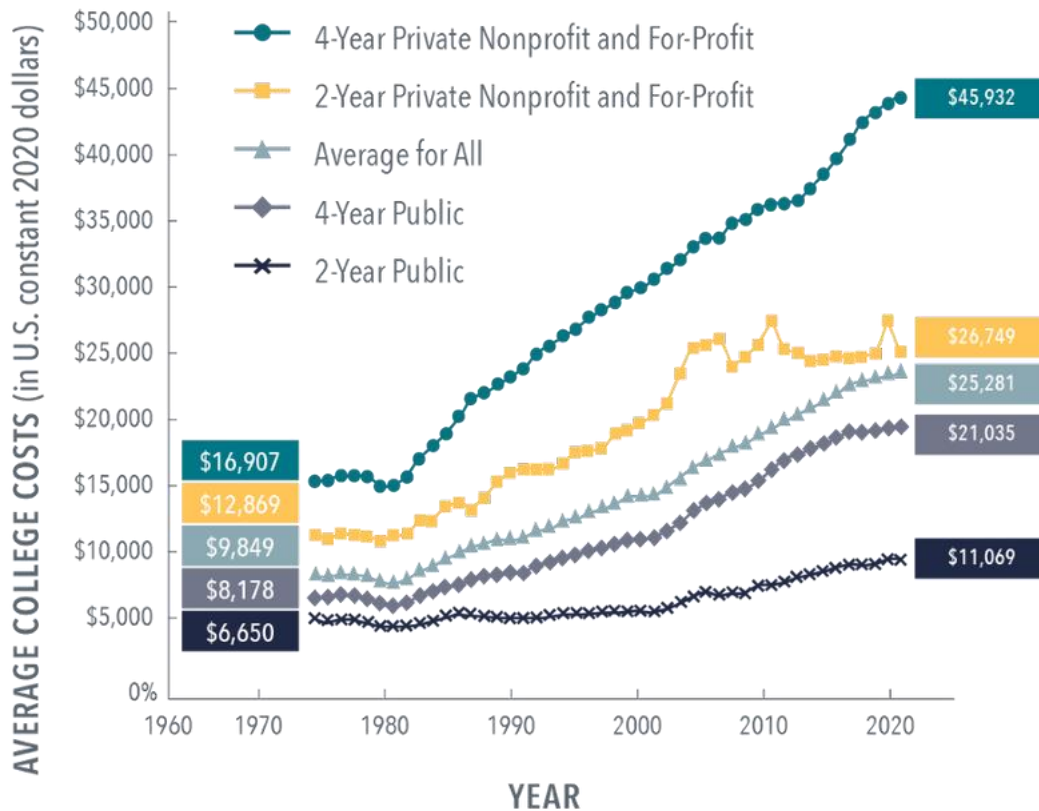


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# Annual college costs have grown significantly.

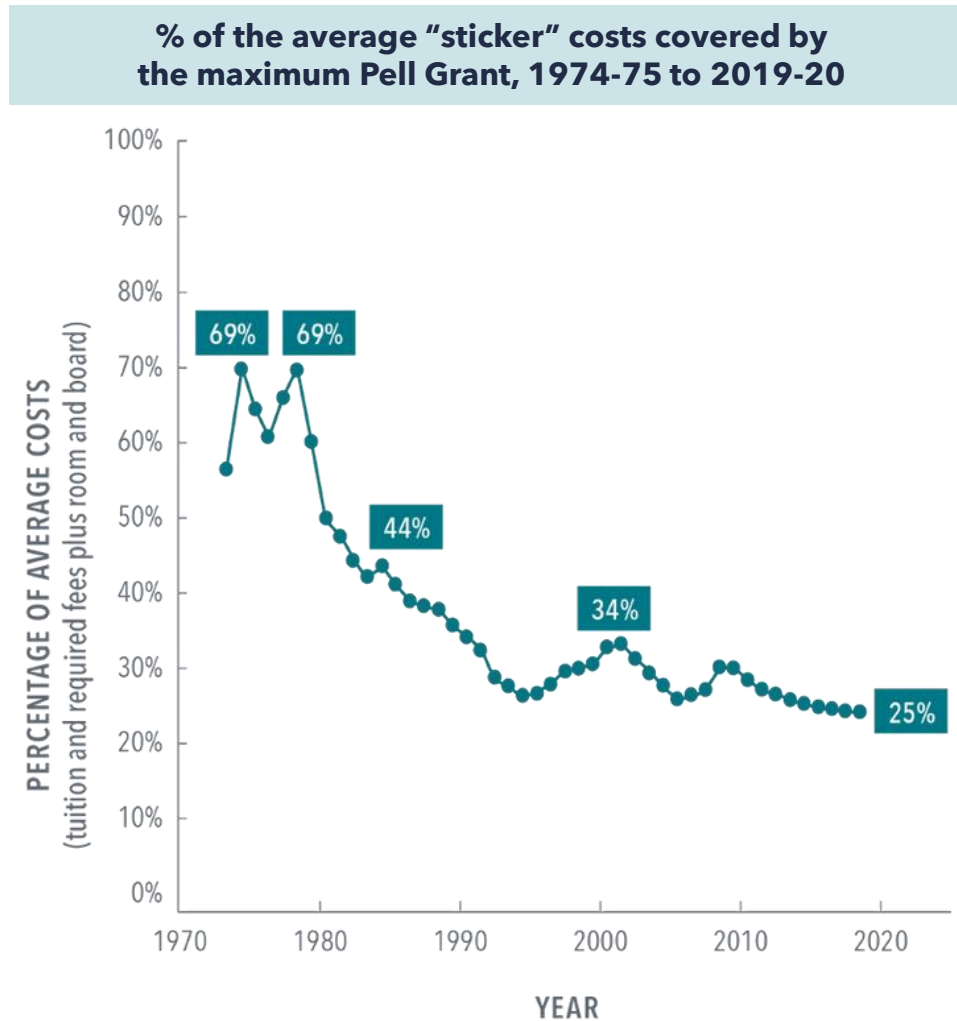
**Increase in average “sticker” or “list” college costs (tuition, fees, room and board) for full-time students, 1974-75 to 2019-20**



Average college costs have grown 2.6X from 1974-75 to 2019-20.

In contrast, U.S. household income grew 1.3X during that same time frame.

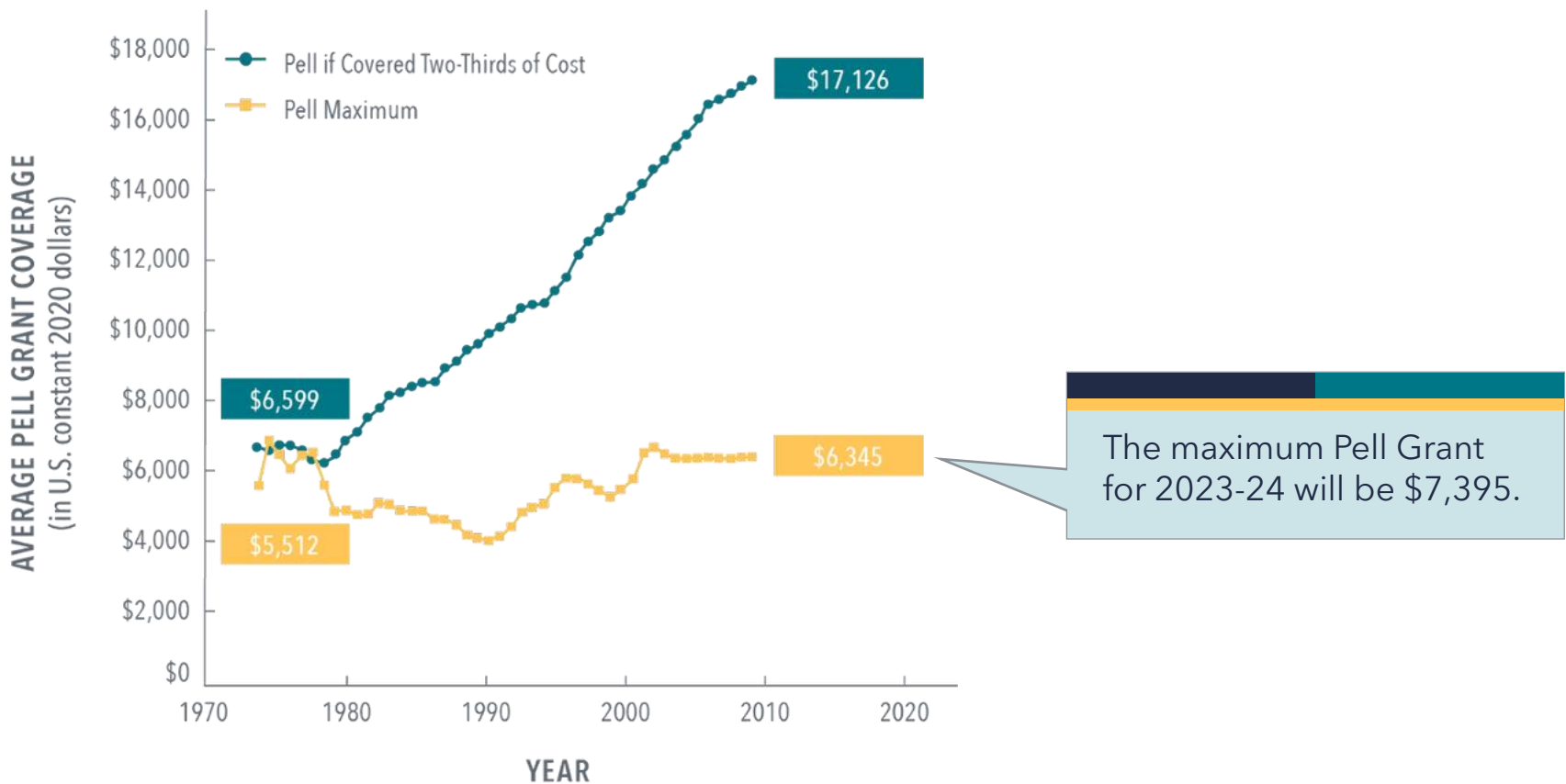
# Pell Grants now cover far less of the average cost of college.





Pell Grants would have to increase *2.7 times* to continue to cover two-thirds of average U.S. college costs.

**Size of Pell Grant required to continue to cover 2/3 of the average cost of college (versus 2019-20 current maximum Pell Grant)**



# Postsecondary debt has increased substantially.

- Current **outstanding college debt is \$1.76 trillion** as of the end of 2022 (up by \$1 trillion from 2008 to 2022).
- **This also does not reflect true cost.** It does not include out-of-pocket spending by students and families, some private loans (such as home equity), and billions in federal, state, and local direct grant aid to students.
- An estimated **44 million people owed federal student loan debt** at the end of 2022 (an estimated 20% of all American adults).
- In 2020-21, **54% of bachelor's degree recipients graduated with debt**; the average amount was \$29,100 – and this does **not** include Parent PLUS loans.
- **College debt cannot be forgiven through bankruptcy**; if necessary, the government can garnish Social Security payments.
- In 2022, an estimated **\$370 billion in debt was held by adults ages 50 and older.**

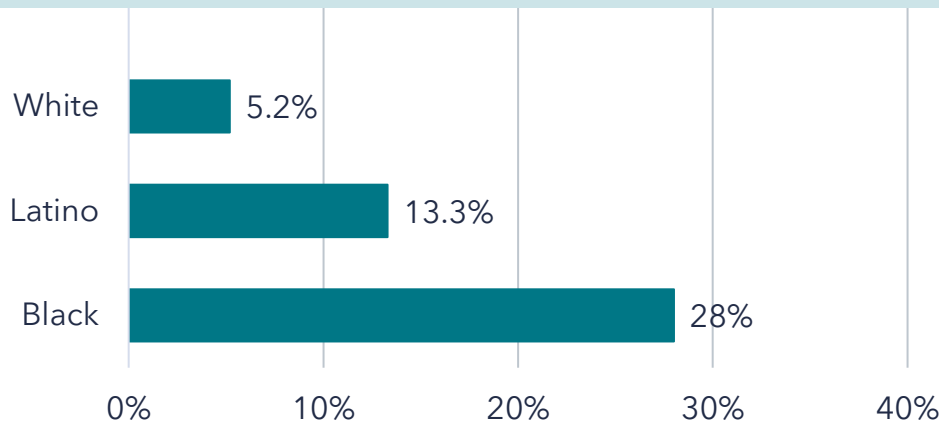


All of this contributes to a lifelong debt burden.

#### Rates of repaying even \$1 of loan principal within five years of the repayment window

Type of Institution	Non-Completers	Completers
<b>All</b>	41%	67%
<b>Public two-year</b>	37%	66%
<b>Public four-year</b>	54%	79%
<b>Private, nonprofit four-year</b>	54%	80%
<b>For-profit</b>	26%	43%

#### 12-year default rates by race/ethnicity



#### Default based on income

**90%** of those who default on federal loans are Pell recipients.



# Returning to Admission's thesis:

We market pursuing a traditional college degree as a crucial investment.

But for many people, particularly those from systemically marginalized communities, it is really a high-stakes gamble.



This is not a blanket indictment of the conventional U.S. system of higher education.

A significant number of two- and four-year postsecondary pathways **do provide value.**

But there are a significant number of conventional pathways that **do not provide value**, particularly for people from systemically marginalized communities, and **that information is not transparent to individuals** making a critical choice to invest in a pathway.

This problem is becoming more magnified as the number and type of postsecondary pathways proliferate.

# Students and employers are growing skeptical and demanding something different.

- **Even pre-pandemic, an increasing number of students were questioning the importance of a traditional college degree:**
  - A 2019 Gallup poll found that the number of U.S. adults who considered a college education “very important” dropped from 70% in 2013 to 51% in 2019, with the starkest decline in young adults ages 18-29, from 74% in 2013 to 41% in 2019.
- **COVID-19 has exacerbated this decline in confidence and desire for alternatives by students:**
  - A 2020-21 series of ECMC surveys found that, of Generation Z, “Their likelihood of pursuing a four-year degree has diminished substantially over the past eight months with only slightly more than half of Gen Z teens now considering it,” and “61% believe a skill-based education (e.g., trade skills, nursing, STEM) makes sense in today's world.”
- **COVID-19 has exacerbated this decline in confidence and desire for alternatives by employers:**
  - Only 60% of employers believe college graduates possess the **knowledge and skills needed** to succeed in entry-level positions.
  - Employers like Google, General Motors Co., Microsoft, and Apple, and the states of Maryland, Utah, and Pennsylvania, are increasingly **dropping a bachelor's degree requirement** for many (though not all) jobs in favor of emphasizing skills. Some employers are focused on **in-house training or apprenticeships** over degrees.

# Enrollment was declining even before COVID-19, and it took a sharp decline during the pandemic.

- **Enrollment was declining before COVID-19:**

- Peak college enrollment was 18.1 million in 2010. 2019 enrollment was 16.9 million.
- A 2019 *Chronicle of Higher Education* survey of 292 institutions found that:
  - ~60% missed their 2019 enrollment goals.
  - ~67% missed their 2019 revenue goals.
- EY-Parthenon estimated a 26% increase in higher education capacity from 2009 to 2019; this could equal as many as 3-5 million unfilled seats and \$27-\$50 billion in spending on excess capacity.
- EY-Parthenon also projected a 13% decline in annual high school graduates by 2030 relative to 2005 graduation rates due to falling birthrates during the last recession.

- **COVID-19 exacerbated this enrollment decline, though there is modest improvement:**

- Undergraduate enrollment declined by 7.6%, or 1.2 million students, between fall 2019 and fall 2022.
- Fall 2022 freshman enrollment is on the rise (+4.3%) but is still down 150,000 compared to fall 2019.



# What can we do?



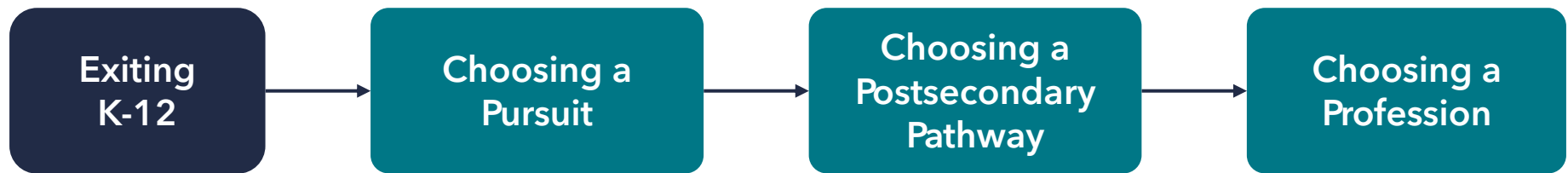


We must shift mindsets on the purpose of postsecondary education (and maybe all education).

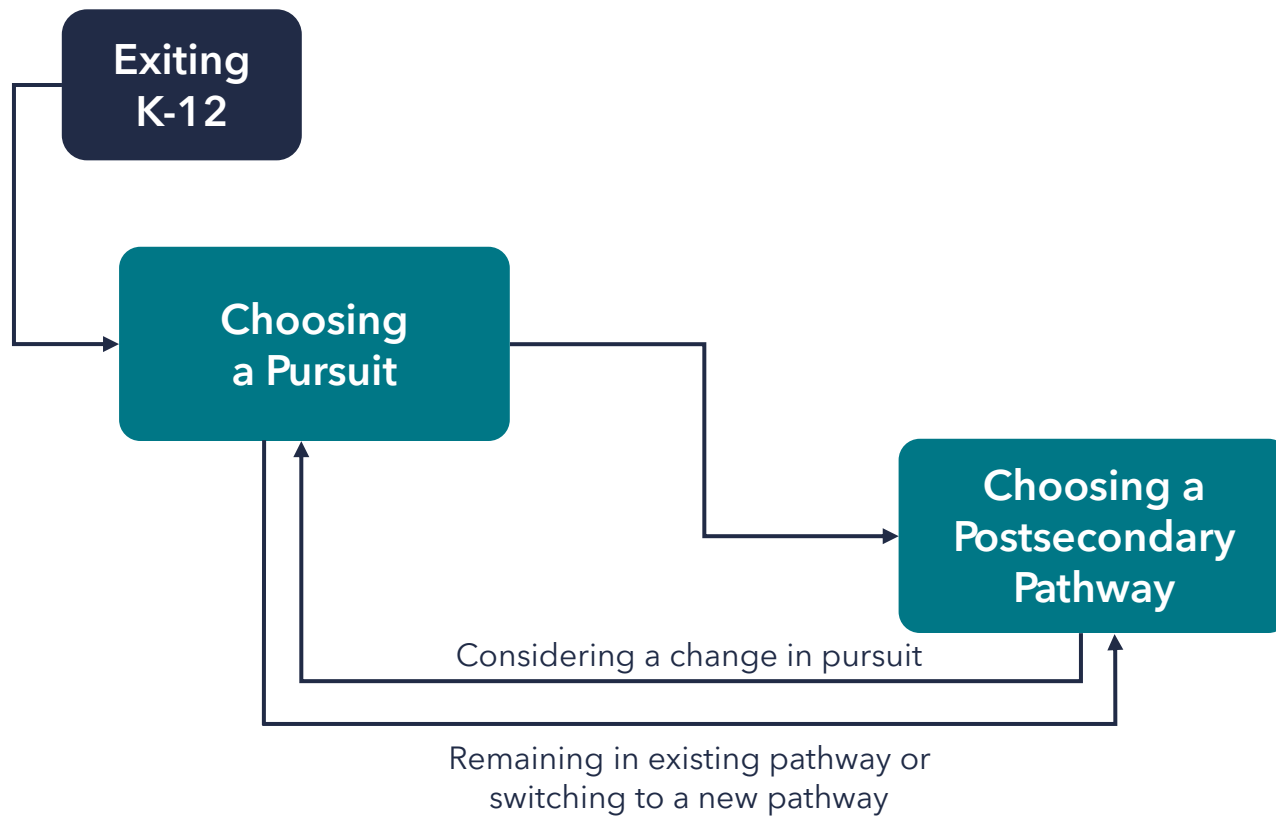
Education has intrinsic value, but ultimately its purpose is to enable individuals to:

1. Achieve economic independence.
2. Fully participate in democracy.
3. Pursue happiness as *they* define it.

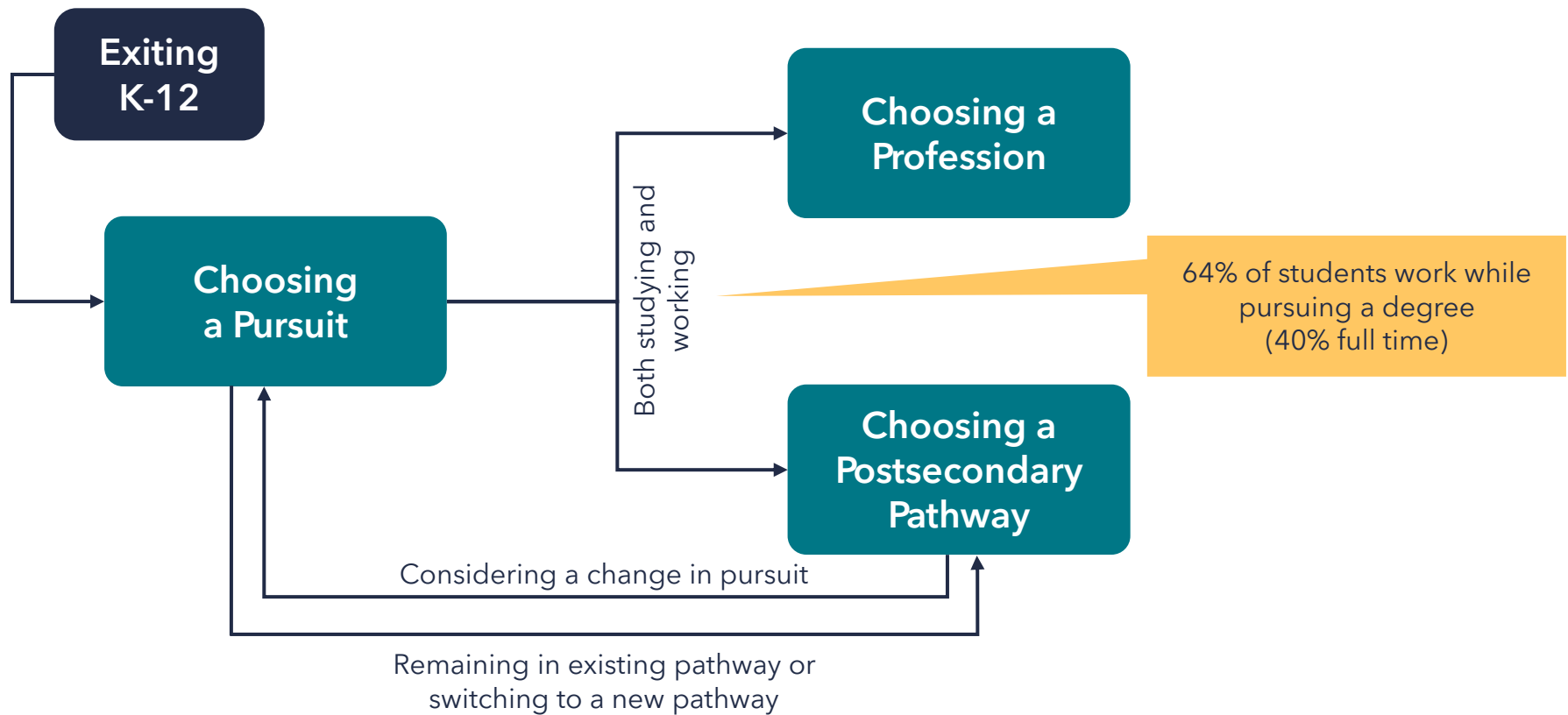
We must shift mindsets about choice being a one-time, linear process.



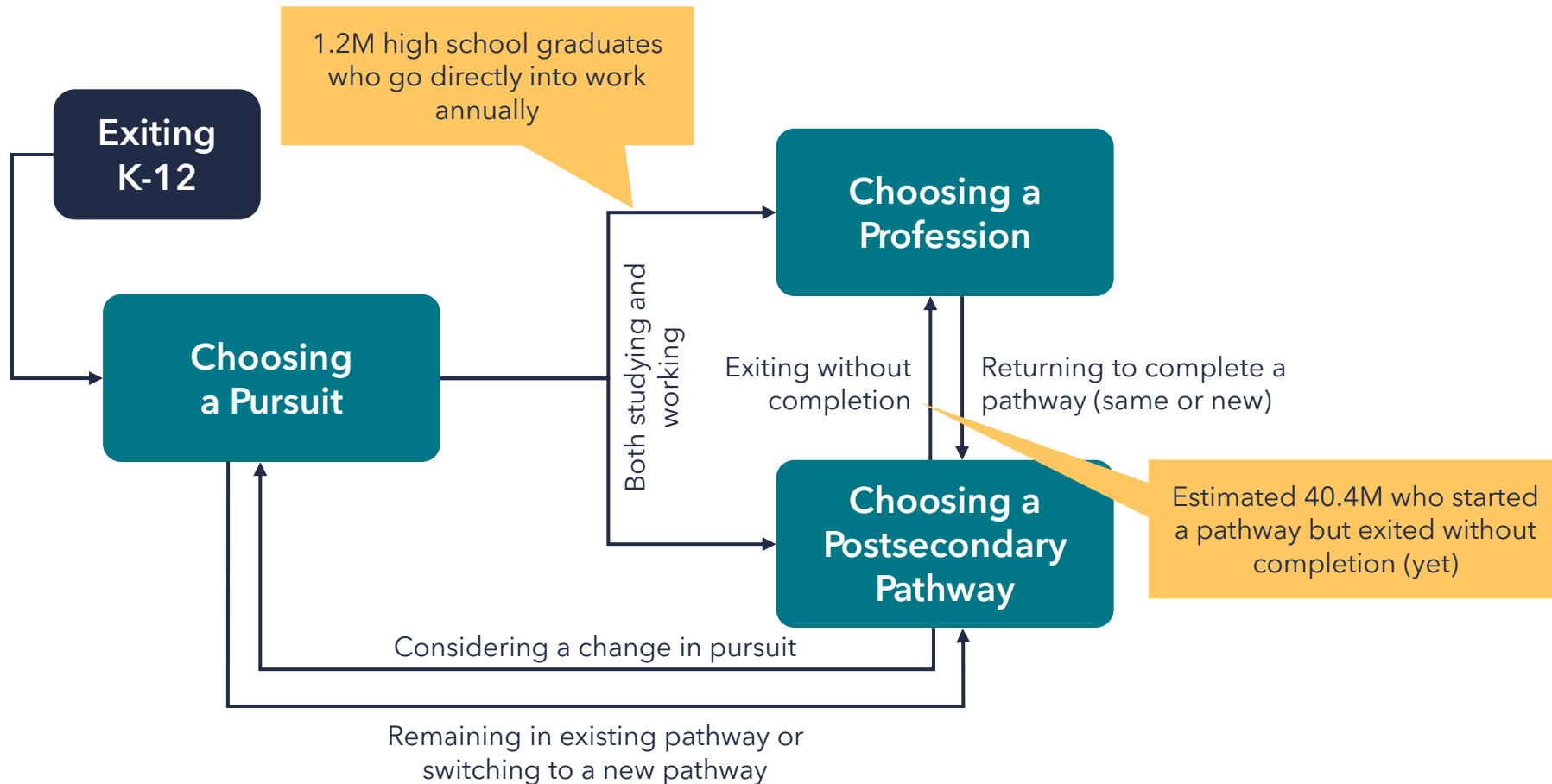
For many people, this process of choice is nonlinear and cyclical.



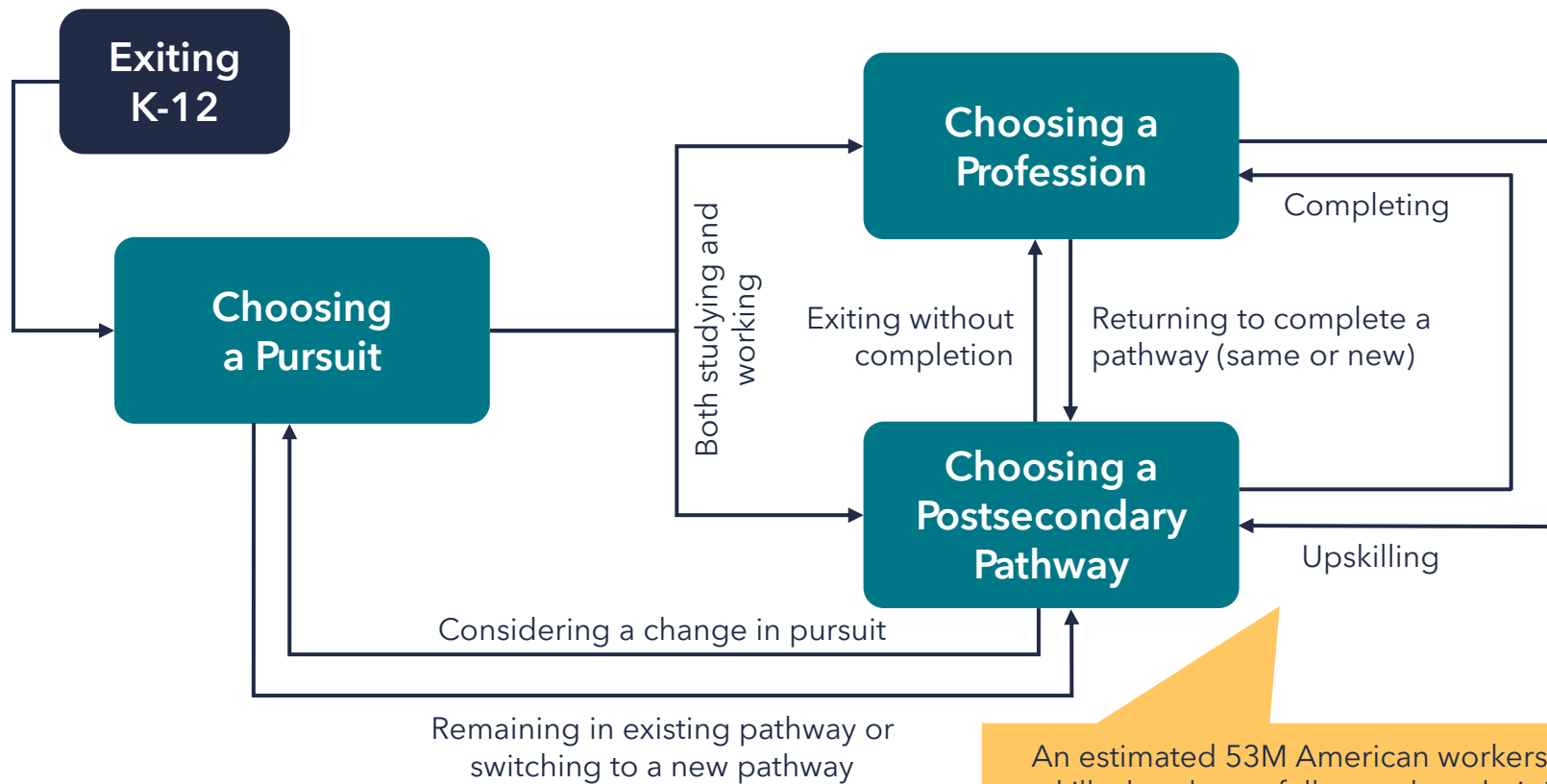
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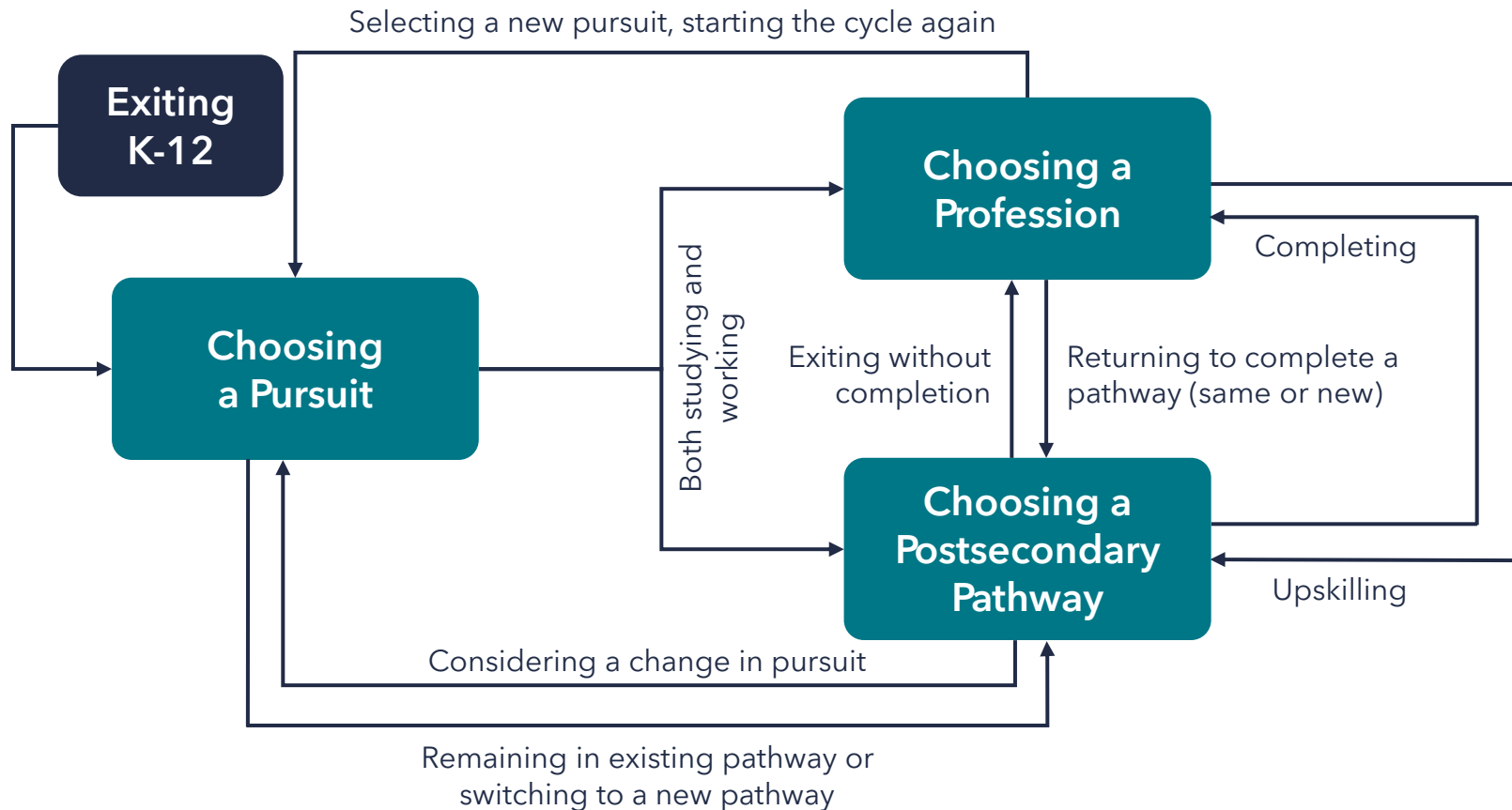
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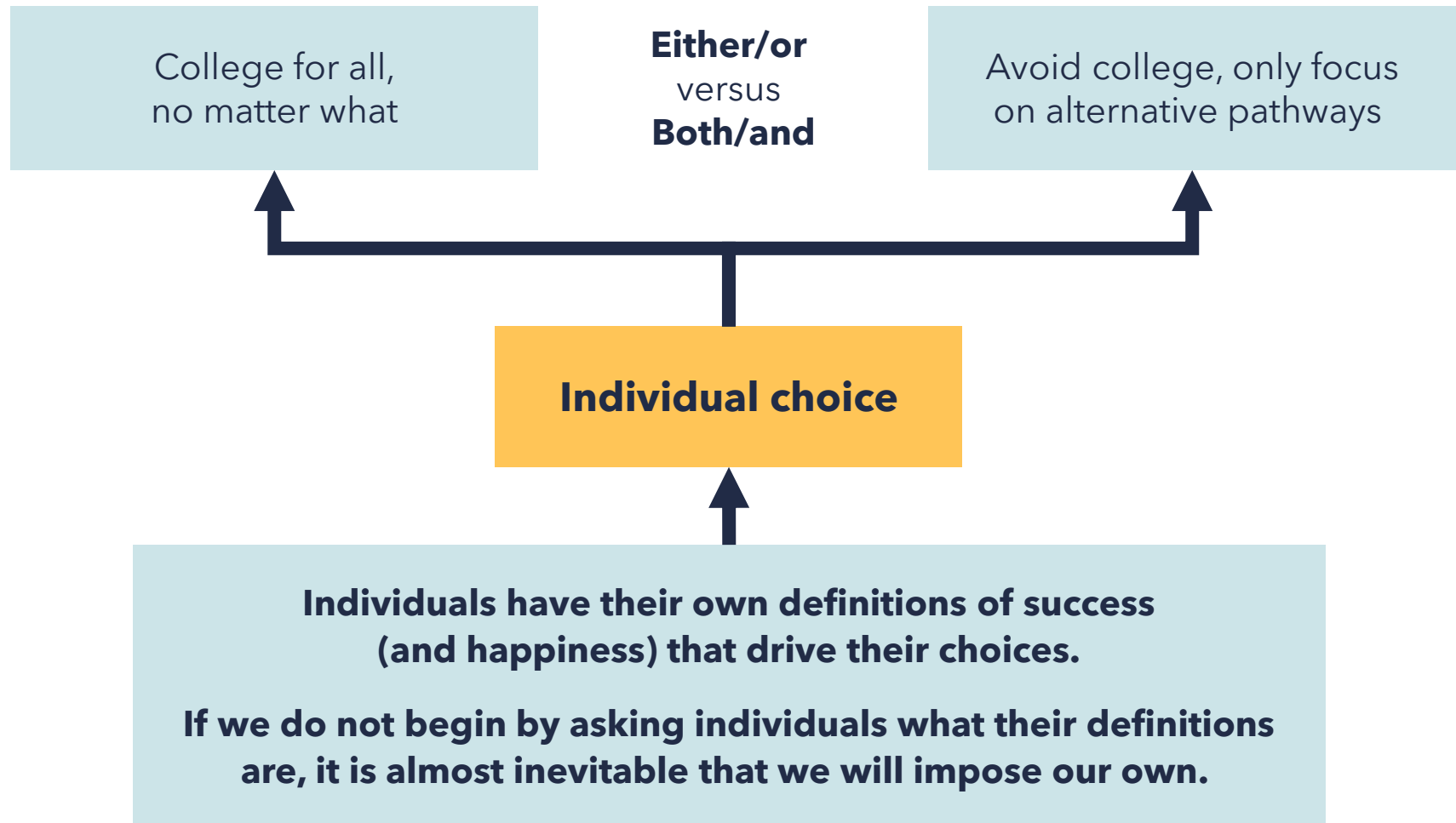
An estimated 53M American workers have skills that do not fully match to their jobs; others want to upskill for further advancement in their professions.

For many people, this process of choice is nonlinear and cyclical.

People need the ability to continue to grow and not have short-term choices close them off from long-term opportunities.



Centering on individuals, their priorities, and their choices is the only way to escape the equity trap prevalent in pathway discussions.



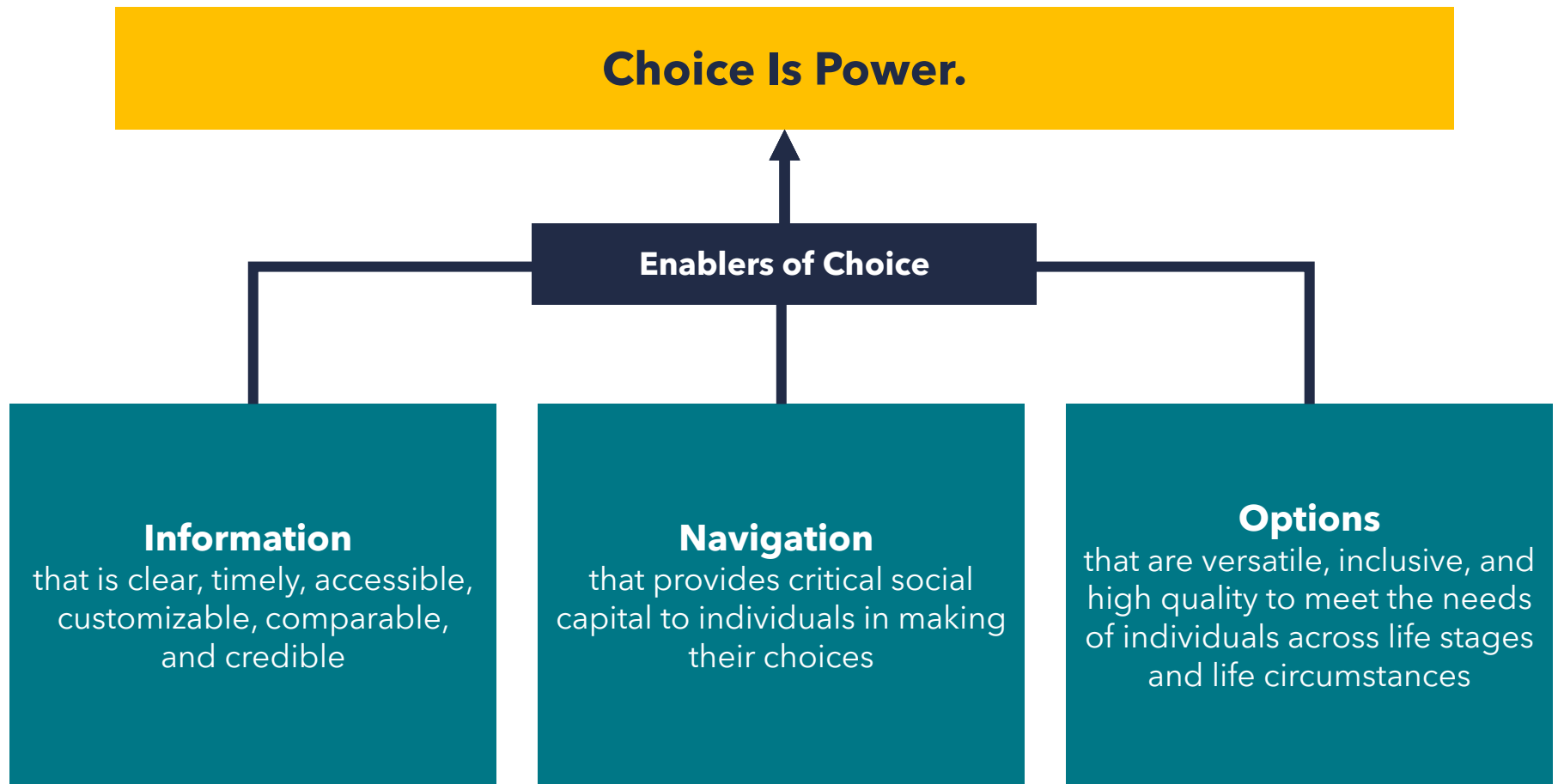


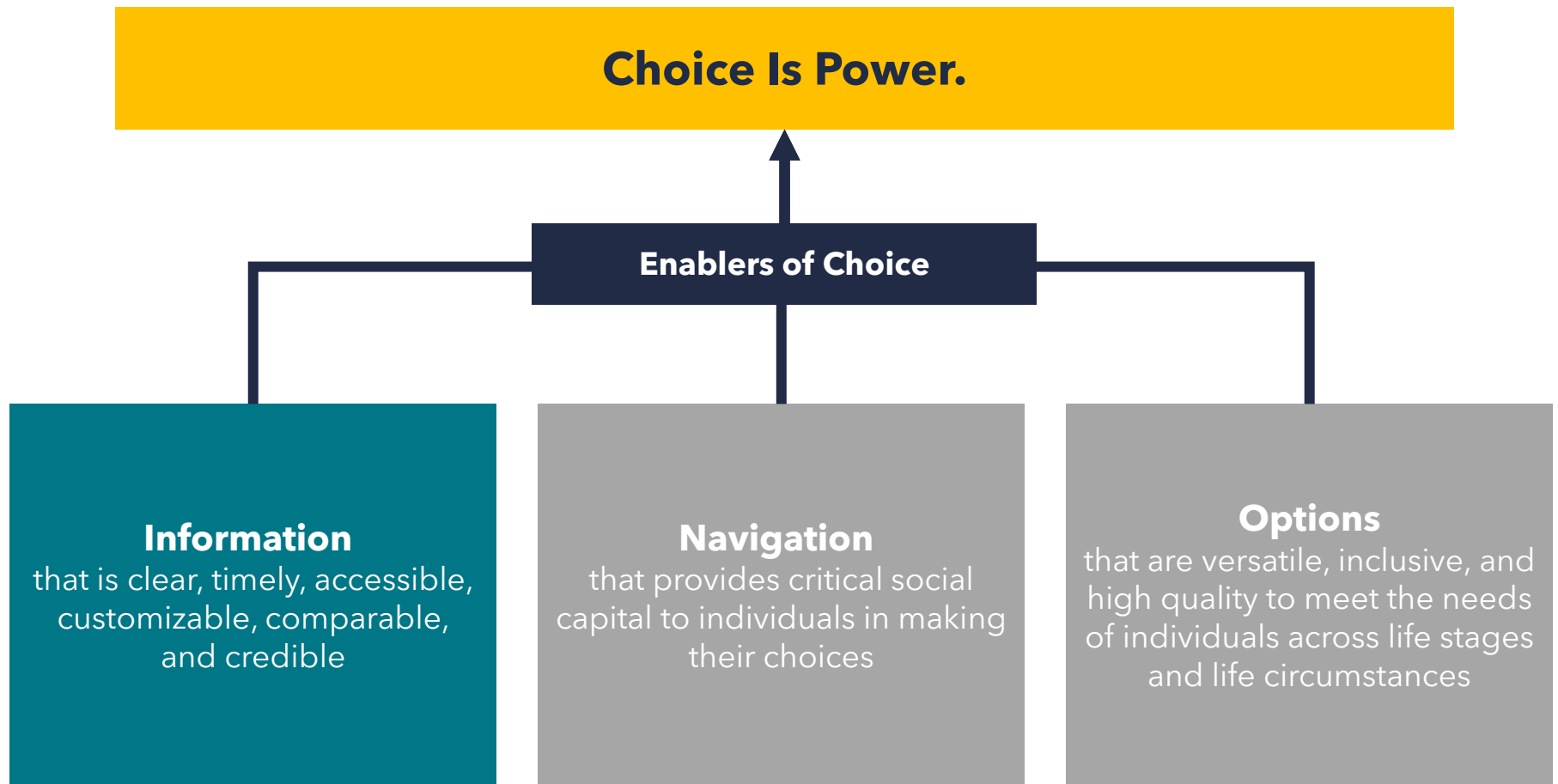
Choice requires that individuals have the freedom to define their own definitions of success, including how to measure a pathway's value.

- Money isn't everything. But it IS important, especially for people who don't have it.
  - We must hold postsecondary pathways accountable for achieving economic value.
  - At the same time, we cannot reduce human value to only economic value.
- Individuals may have very different monetary goals and make trade-offs against other non-monetary priorities (e.g., fulfillment, family, community, experiences, work-life balance, stature, public service, power).
- However, most individuals lack the information to quantify value – monetary *and* non-monetary.
- For more on measuring value, visit "Dollars and Sense: Measuring the Value of Postsecondary Pathways" at [bellwether.org/beta/admission](https://bellwether.org/beta/admission).

Beta by Bellwether: Admission.

**Choice Is Power.**





# Ten elements of information guide choice.

**What do I want to be (pursuit),**  
and what information will help me  
make that choice?



**What pathways are most likely to  
get me there,** and what information  
will help me make that choice?

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## 1. Self-Awareness

- An individual's understanding of their aptitudes and strengths, their interests and passions, and their priorities that collectively shape their personal choices.

## 2. Exposure and Affirmation

- Exposure to a broad range of professional possibilities.
- Affirmation demonstrating that individuals from all backgrounds can succeed in a profession.

## 3. Skills and Education Requirements

- The academic, technical, and/or "21st-century" skills required to succeed in a profession.
- The need for continuing or advanced education over time for success in a profession.

## 4. Labor Market Demand

- Demand for a given profession (i.e., is it growing, where is demand located, and how durable is that demand over time).

## 5. Value and Progression within a Given Profession

- Short- and long-term monetary earning potential as well as non-monetary measures of value, and "option value" of professional advancement over time.

# Ten elements of information guide choice.

**What do I want to be (pursuit)**  
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**What pathways are most likely to  
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## 6. Admission to a Pathway

- The set of potential pathways that an individual should consider based on their chosen pursuit.
- The processes that need to be successfully navigated for admission; if it is a competitive pathway, how an individual can be competitive in applying.

## 7. Financial and Time Investment of a Pathway

- The full true cost and debt required to complete a pathway.
- The length of time it will take to complete a pathway; the time commitment while in a pathway, and how that impacts the ability to meet other commitments (such as family and work).

## 8. Experience and Support Provided by a Pathway

- Inclusive and affirming supports a pathway provides; the flexibility in learning modes provided (in-person, virtual, or hybrid; live, offline, or hybrid; variety of times, places).
- The academic skills, technical skills, "21st-century" skills, and social capital assets a pathway provides; the experiential learning opportunities a pathway provides.

## 9. Completion Rate of a Pathway

- The likelihood that an individual with a given demographic profile will complete that pathway.

## 10. Value of a Pathway if Completed

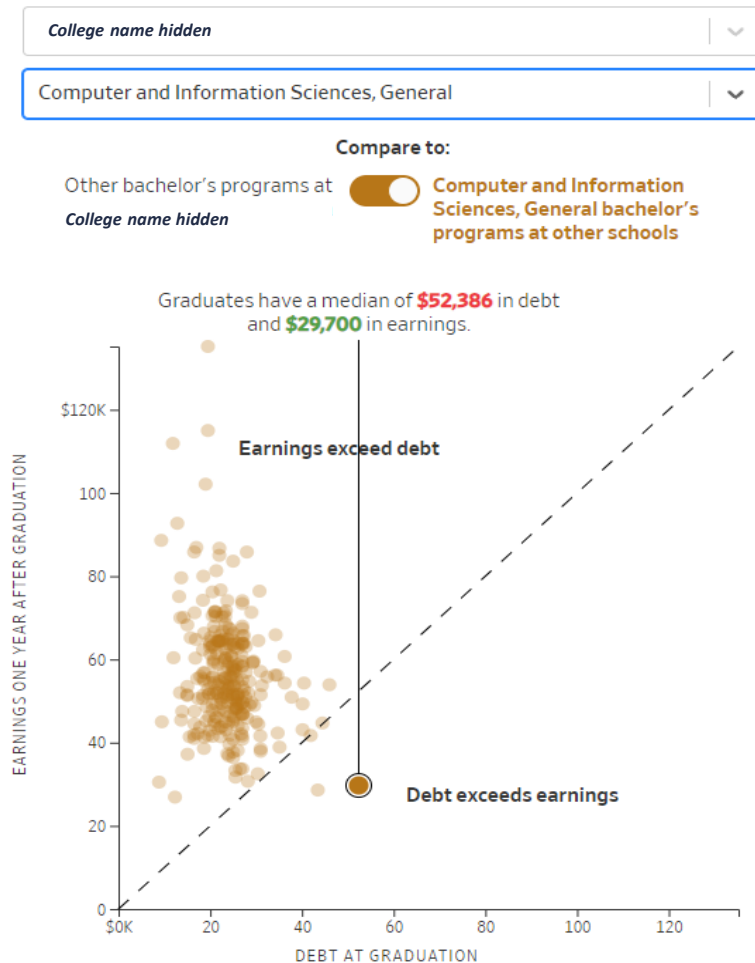
- The likelihood of employment, economic returns, and other measures of value for an individual from a specific demographic profile as a result of completing a pathway.

# To create value for individuals in making choices, information must meet a set of conditions.

Conditions	Definition
Created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Does the desired information <b>exist</b>?</li></ul>
Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Are key pieces of information <b>combined</b> and/or <b>connected longitudinally</b> (e.g., K-12, postsecondary, and workforce information) in ways necessary to provide key understanding and insights?</li></ul>
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is information made <b>available</b> to key stakeholders – like the public – in an <b>easy-to-find</b> location? Is it accessible on <b>mobile devices</b>? Is it translated into a <b>broad range of languages</b>?</li></ul>
Timely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is this information <b>updated with the frequency</b> necessary for it to be actionable for those using it in making choices?</li></ul>
Disaggregated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is this information <b>disaggregated by income, race, and gender</b> so individuals can assess postsecondary pathways based on how well they serve students with similar backgrounds?</li></ul>
Actionable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is this information in a <b>clear visual format</b> for those who may not have a lot of experience in data analysis?</li><li>Is it <b>easy to customize/personalize</b> based on an individual's priorities and the choice(s) they are making?</li><li>Is it <b>easy to make comparisons</b> so that an individual can critically evaluate their options?</li></ul>
Credible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is this information from a <b>trusted source</b>? Do people have <b>high confidence</b> in its accuracy? Is it <b>transparent</b> where the information is coming from, what is included (or excluded), and how it is compiled and quantified?</li></ul>



# How information is provided determines its utility.



**From a November 2019 article in *The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* as an interactive graphic.** In terms of evaluating this example against the prior page of conditions, this information:

- Is created and connected, leveraging multiple sources and variables via College Scorecard.
- Is not accessible – a WSJ subscription is required.
- Is not timely – data from 2016-17 provided in 2019.
- Is not disaggregated by race, income, or gender.
- Is actionable in that it is a clear visual format for ease of use; can be customized within a limited set of information; is fairly easy to compare.
- Is it credible? The presenter, *WSJ*, is credible, as is information from the federal government's College Scorecard (CS). But CS also has limitations that are not transparently explained to users.

If an individual is considering this institution and degree, they should know these general outcomes – ideally by specific demographics – to inform their decision.

# There can be huge complexities and inaccuracies in information — take this example of a financial aid analysis.

A 2018 analysis by New America and uAspire of 515 student financial aid letters found that these letters are frequently somewhere between difficult to understand, incomprehensible, and, in some cases, deceptive, noting:



- **Confusing Jargon and Terminology:** Of the 455 colleges that offered an unsubsidized student loan, we found 136 unique terms for that loan, including 24 that did not include the word “loan.”
- **Omission of the Complete Cost:** Of our 515 letters, more than one-third did not include any cost information with which to contextualize the financial aid offered.
- **Failure to Differentiate Types of Aid:** Seventy percent of letters grouped all aid together and provided no definitions to indicate to students how grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study differ.
- **Misleading Packaging of Parent PLUS Loans:** Nearly 15 percent of letters included a PLUS loan as an “award,” making the financial aid package appear far more generous than it really was.
- **Vague Definitions and Poor Placement of Work-Study:** Of institutions that offered work-study, 70 percent provided no explanation of work-study and how it differs from other types of aid.
- **Inconsistent Bottom Line Calculations:** In our sample, only 40 percent calculated what students would need to pay, and those 194 institutions had 23 different ways of calculating remaining costs.
- **No Clear Next Steps:** Only about half of the letters provided information about what to do to accept or decline awards, and those that did had inconsistent policies.

# Sources of information — and the biggest challenge to creating information that provides value.

## Major sources of information

- **Federal information systems:** IPEDS, NCES, College Scorecard, O'NET, the U.S. Census, the IRS, etc. (and nonprofits like National Student Clearinghouse aggregating national data).
- **State information systems:** Individual data sets and increasingly statewide longitudinal data systems.
- **Postsecondary institutions:** Providing information directly to prospective students.
- **Nonprofits and for-profits serving students, schools, and parents directly:** Harvesting information from the sources above and combining it with an institution's own proprietary information on outcomes for the students it has served.

## Challenge

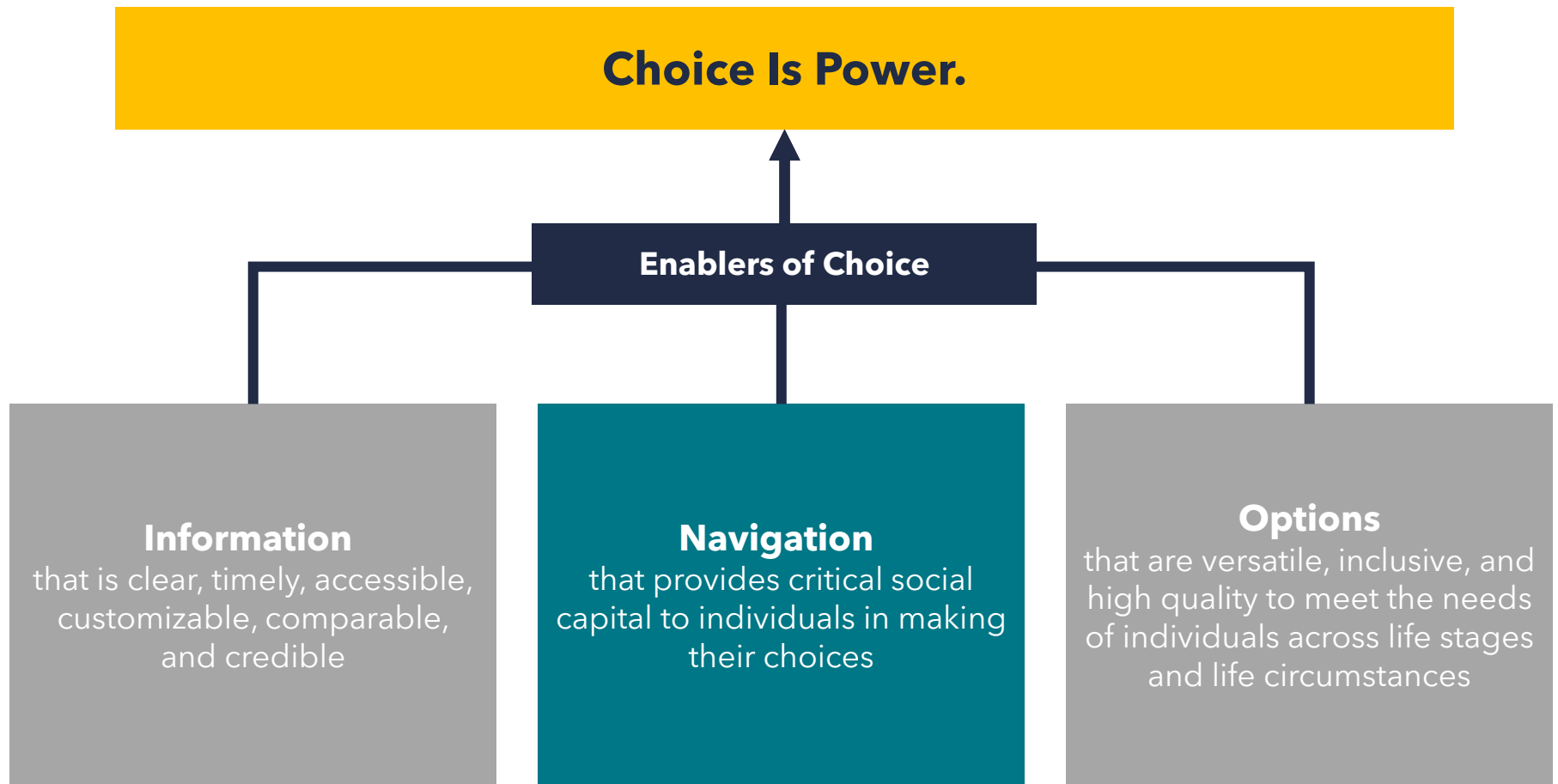
Creating the conditions for information to be valuable  
**is not rocket science;**

**it is not even data science;**

**it *is* political science.** Do we have the political will to ensure that the ten elements of information are provided to individuals, institutions, and policymakers so information can be used to drive choice, performance, and accountability?

# Information, while crucial, has its own limitations.

- **Some critiques of information focus on the limits of humans as rational actors**, such as not acting to maximize value, elevating the short term over the long term, loss/risk/debt aversion, and brain development before age 25. But many of these critiques don't incorporate the lived realities of systemically marginalized communities.
- Some information is viewed through **the lens of socially imposed stereotypes** about who is “college material.”
- The language of information can **reinforce both positive and negative identities** (e.g., asset- versus deficit-based language).
- There is **a lot of misinformation** – including marketing – out there competing with accurate information.
- Past a certain point, the **sheer volume of information can be overwhelming**. When faced with the **paradox of too many choices**, people revert to what's most familiar.
- Using information to make choices often requires **engaging with complex, opaque, and alienating bureaucratic systems** (for example, financial aid).



# Navigation.

- Information is necessary but often not sufficient.
- The messenger is as important as the message (be it a person or a platform).
- Further, without the messenger, the message may never be accessed and understood.
- Navigation **is** social capital.
- Initially, we thought this was about a “trusted” navigator.
- But we learned it is really about navigators who are trusted, themselves informed, culturally inclusive, and unbiased – including formal navigation counselors, informal counselors, parents, peers, public figures, etc.

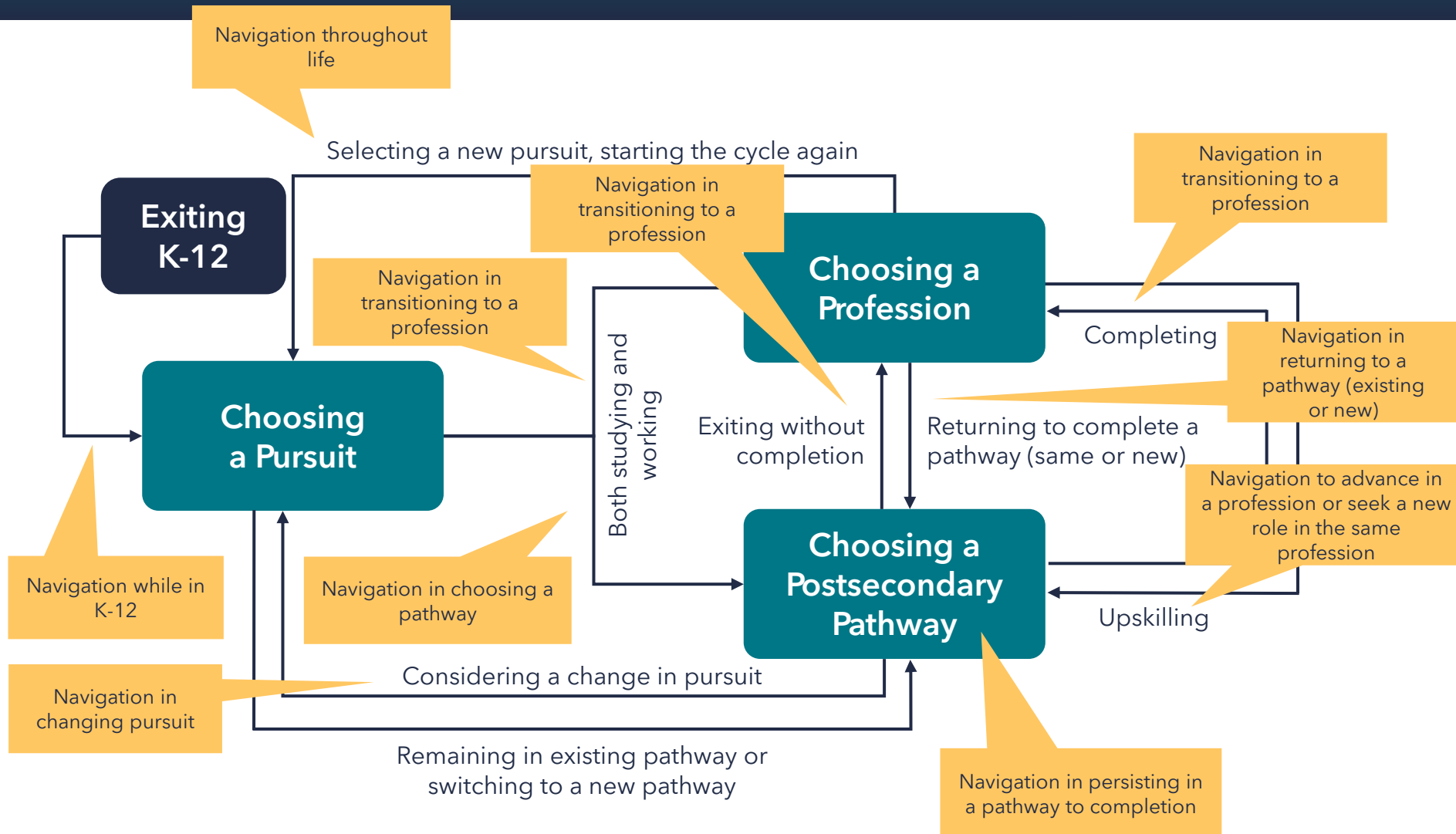
# Navigation ensures that information is used effectively.

- **Strong navigation:**

- **Exposes an individual to the full array of information sources** they should consider.
- **Validates** which sources of information are or are not credible.
- **Explains the strengths and limitations** of each source of information.
- **Helps an individual understand and make meaning of information**, guides them to what information is most important for them to consider, and helps an individual **narrow down to an actionable set of strong options** (based on an individual's priorities) that they should consider.
- **Helps an individual thoughtfully consider the short term versus long term**, potential **risks and rewards**, and – crucially – what an individual's **definition of value is (monetary and non-monetary)** that guides their choices.
- **Provides encouragement and positive affirmation** to counter negative, false stereotypes often imposed by society.
- **Helps an individual successfully navigate complex bureaucratic systems** to gain and apply information (for example, financial aid).

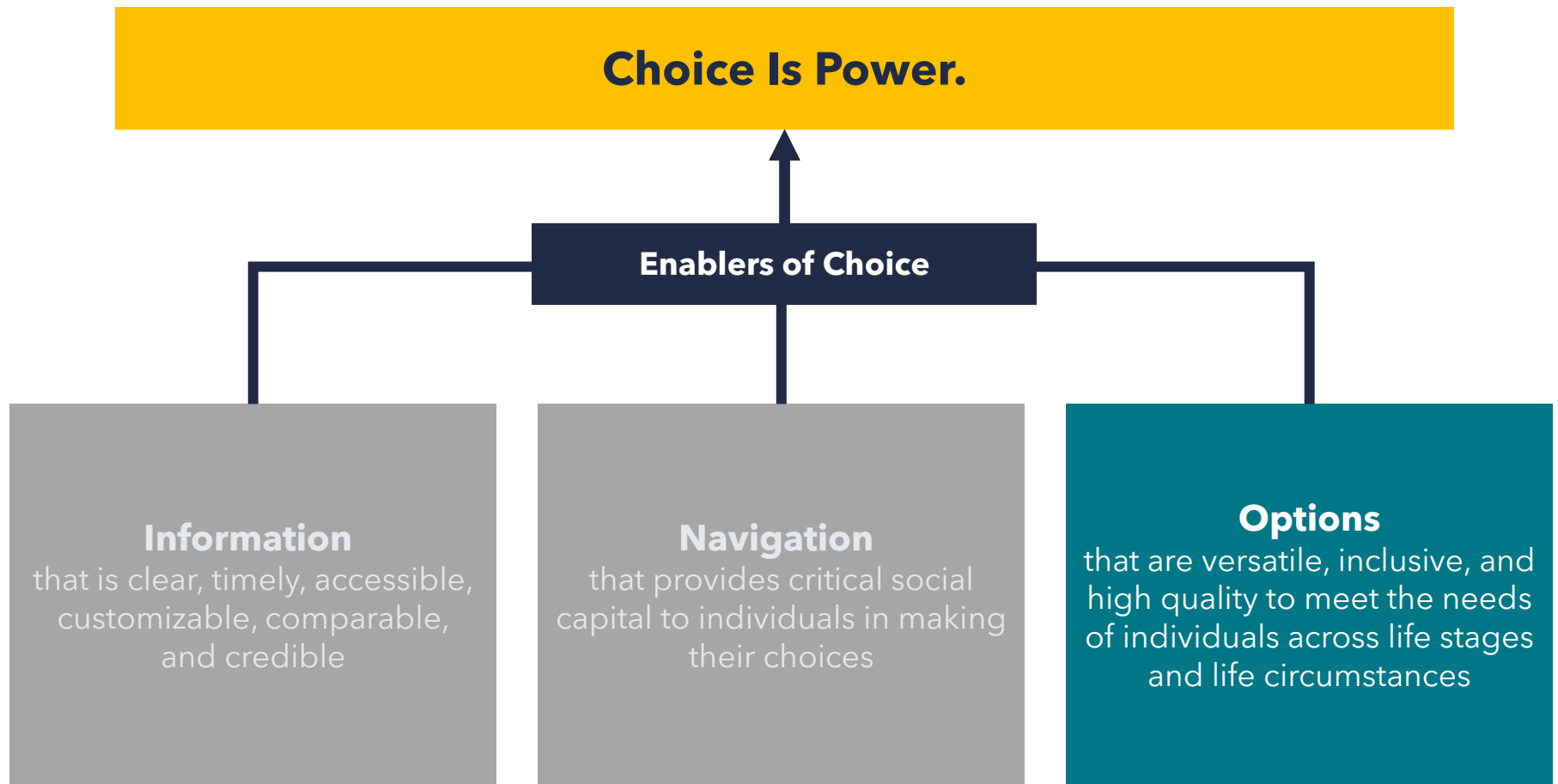
- **A tension in navigation coming back to choice: how to inform, inspire, and influence ... without imposing.** *"Our role is to ask the questions they don't know to ask, but not to answer the questions for them."*
- **The ultimate purpose of navigation is to** ***"build an individual's agency and power to make their own choices"***, which includes building their ability to go out to get information and use it themselves so they ultimately aren't dependent on us."

# Navigation is a lifelong need.





Versatile, inclusive, high-quality options.



A postsecondary pathway is a form of currency.

A postsecondary pathway is nothing more than a currency – a medium of exchanging value.

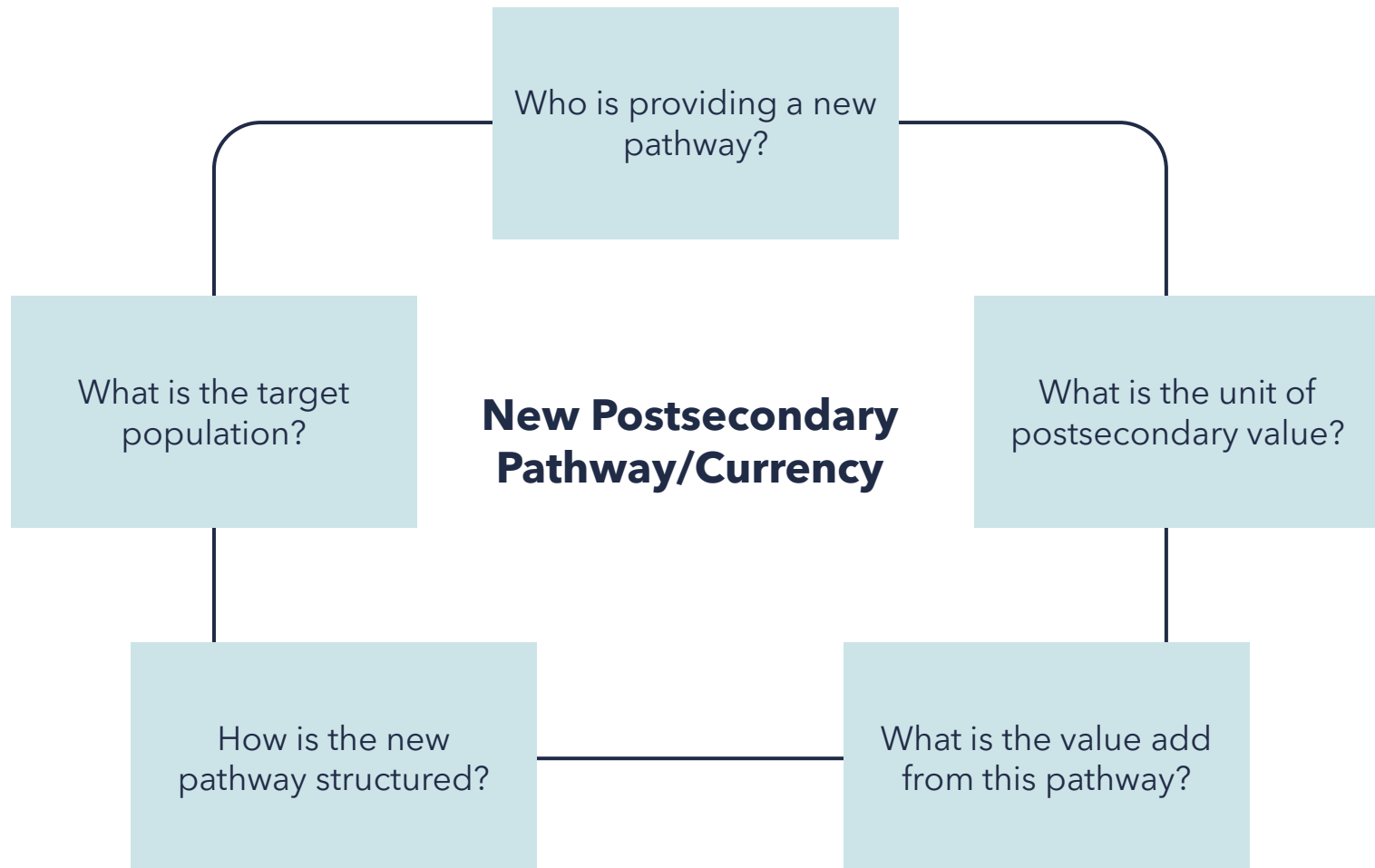


A disconcerting number of existing two- and four-year conventional college pathways overinflate their value.

# There has been a proliferation of new postsecondary currencies.

- A variety of new currencies are emerging, including credentials, certificates, apprenticeships, badges, licensures, and assessments (as well as some innovative new two- and four-year models).
- As of 2022, there are almost 1.1 million potential postsecondary currencies, with a net growth of 109,000 in the last year alone:
  - ~234,000 of these are conventional two- and four-year degrees or graduate degrees from conventional higher education institutions.
  - ~843,000 are non-degree currencies.
- There are nearly 60,000 different institutions offering these currencies – not only conventional two- and four-year institutions, but also nonprofits, for-profits, government, and companies providing them directly to prospective employees or existing employees.
- There is *no common* language to describe these new currencies.
- These new currencies could both compete with existing two- and four-year degree pathways *and* complement them if they are stackable toward a degree.

Draft: There is a complex set of design decisions to be made in creating a new postsecondary pathway/currency.



# Draft: The five design elements in more detail (options in each design element are not necessarily mutually exclusive).

Who is delivering a new postsecondary pathway?	What is the target population?	What is the unit of postsecondary value?	How is the new pathway structured?	What is the value add from this pathway?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing accredited higher education institutions</li> <li>"New" accredited higher education institutions</li> <li>Nonprofits</li> <li>For-profits (private/public)</li> <li>Employers</li> <li>Government (workforce boards, area technical centers, etc.)</li> <li>Temp agencies</li> <li>Partnerships across multiple entities</li> <li>Other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current K-12 students</li> <li>Graduating from high school and immediately pursuing a pathway</li> <li>Opportunity Youth (ages 16-24 w/o high school diploma)</li> <li>Some college but exited without a degree</li> <li>Those who have never pursued a pathway (some or all ages)</li> <li>Those seeking upskilling within an existing profession</li> <li>Those seeking reskilling to enter a new profession</li> <li>Other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A four-year degree</li> <li>A two-year degree</li> <li>A discrete or stackable certificate, credential, or badge</li> <li>An assessment or simulation to demonstrate capability, and/or license</li> <li>Completing an apprenticeship</li> <li>A portfolio of work to demonstrate capability</li> <li>Access to an employment marketplace and opportunities, and/or references</li> <li>Other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person</li> <li>Virtual</li> <li>Hybrid</li> </ul> </li> <li>When: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live</li> <li>Asynchronous</li> <li>Hybrid</li> </ul> </li> <li>Where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School</li> <li>Work</li> <li>Home</li> <li>Hybrid</li> </ul> </li> <li>Dosage: Frequency, intensity, and duration of pathway</li> <li>Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed-paced</li> <li>Self-paced</li> <li>Competency/mastery</li> </ul> </li> <li>Experiential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School</li> <li>Work</li> <li>Hybrid</li> </ul> </li> <li>Level of advising supports</li> <li>Other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic skills</li> <li>Technical skills</li> <li>Workplace skills (soft, 21st-century, executive, life, etc.)</li> <li>Network and social capital</li> <li>Other?</li> </ul>

## Coming back to information and the gambling metaphor ...

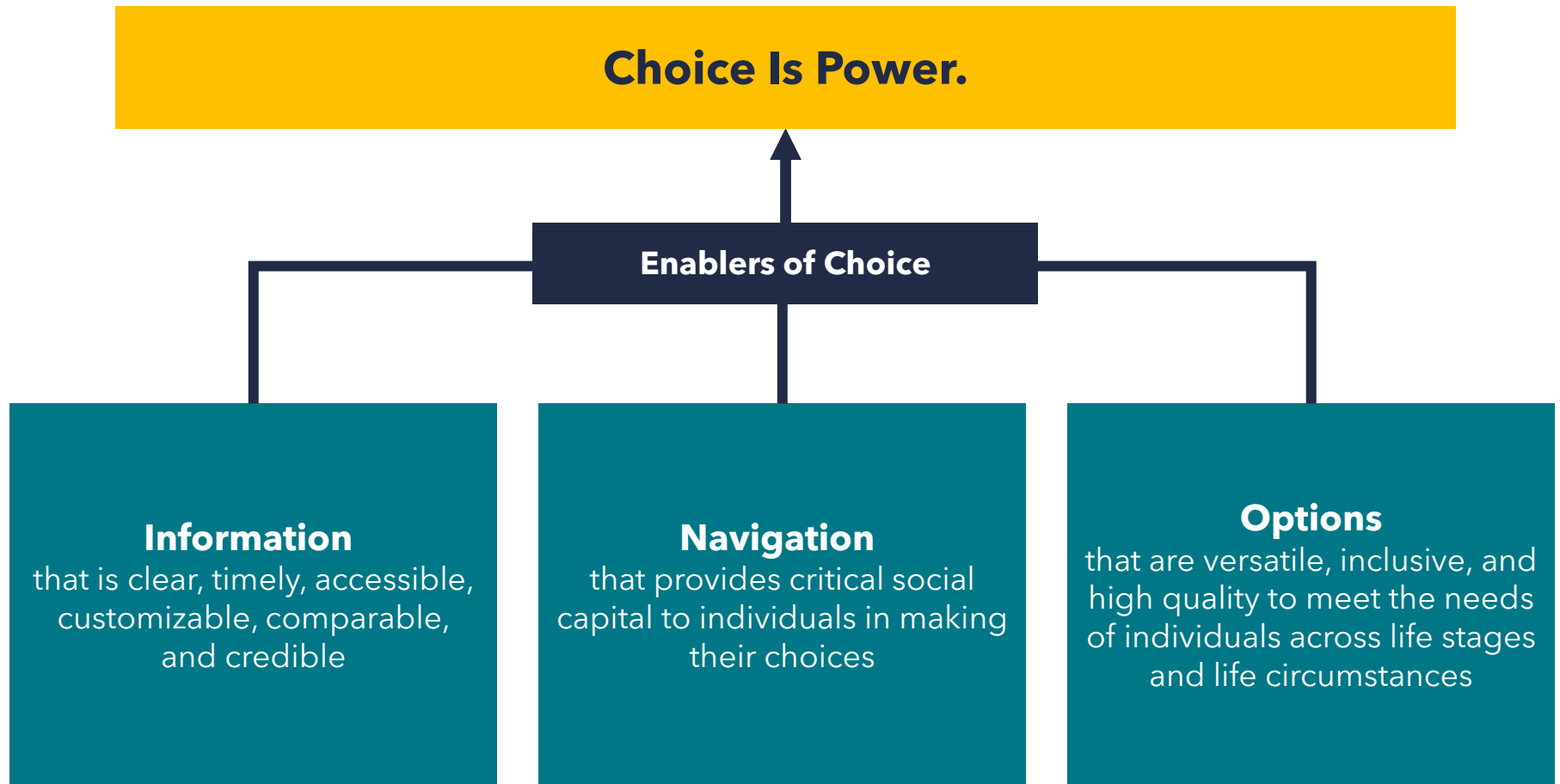
**If we don't have information about which of these emerging pathways work and for whom, all we're doing is adding more slot machines to the casino floor.**



# Last, let's not discount the existing system of higher education and the potential to increase the value of its pathways.

- **Some colleges and universities are making difficult choices to balance success and sustainability.**
  - Evaluating existing programs by their **ability to deliver value, student demand, and financial impact** on the institution, while also tempered by the **social value of specific pathways** (like teaching) and **equity of access** (which is sometimes in tension with efficiency). Many new degree programs have proliferated recently (their value needs to be assessed), while other programs are being cut.
  - Some mergers/consolidations of programs, campuses, and/or institutions.
- **Some two- and four-year degree granting institutions are exploring a range of innovations to improve program delivery, cost, and value (partial list):**
  - Stronger alignment with workforce needs.
  - Skills acquisition and experiential learning.
  - Online/hybrid programs, some of which are anytime and anywhere, and some of which are competency-based.
  - Early college models.
  - Accelerated degree programs.
  - Seeking to reengage individuals who have exited a pathway without completing it.
  - Providing more supports for student persistence and success.
  - Offering their own new currencies beyond two- and four-year degrees.
  - Providing a "lifelong" curriculum for individuals to continually return to over the course of their lives.

# Admission - Part 1 (more to come)





# Thank You



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