

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN JOBS FIRST PRIORITY SECTORS

Presented to the South Central Coast Regional Consortium



[bw] RESEARCH
PARTNERSHIP

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ZOOM





INTRODUCTION

DATA & KEY FINDINGS

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Q&A

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

SPEAKERS



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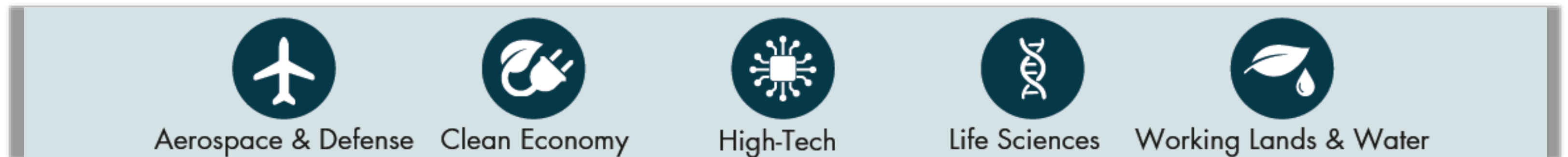
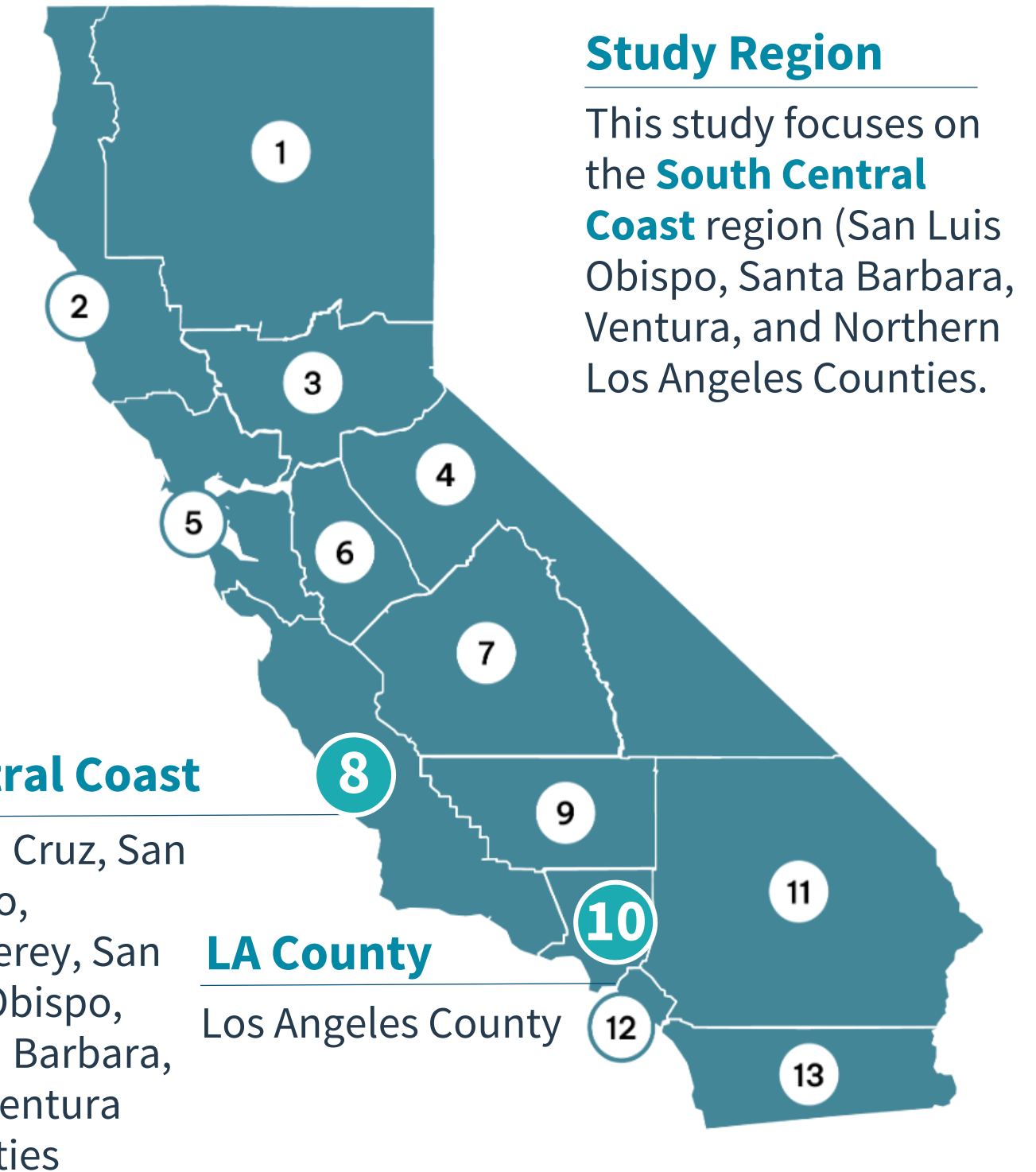


JOSH WILLIAMS

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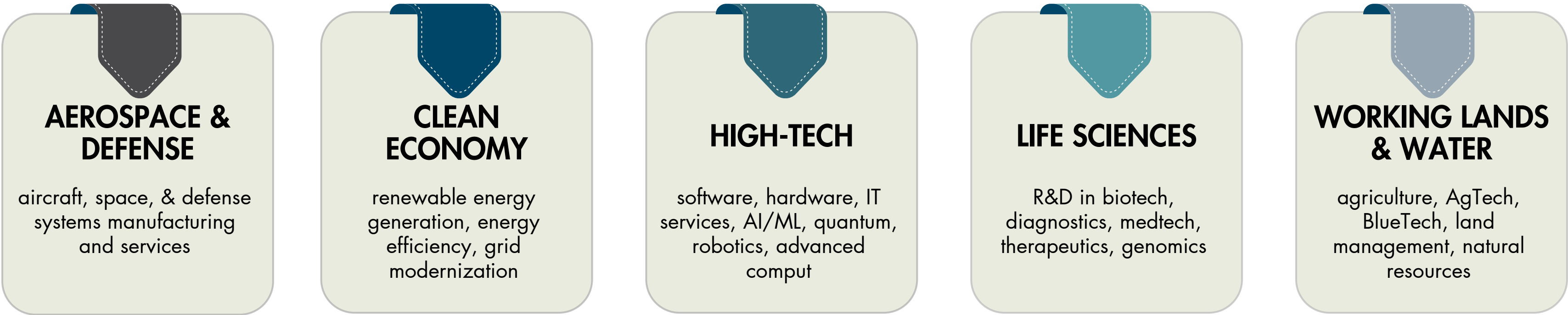
Why these sectors?

- The State of California defines 13 Jobs First regions based on shared economic ties.
- This analysis focuses on the South Central Coast's five Jobs First priority sectors, which anchor **regional innovation, investment, and workforce opportunity**.
- While not representing the full economy, these priority sectors **share workforce needs** across technician roles and foundational job readiness skills.
- A regional investment framework can align community college capacity with employer demand, **strengthening economic mobility** across the region.

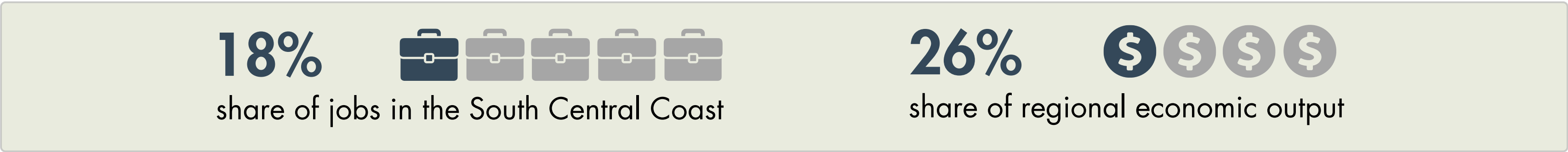


PART 2. DATA AND KEY FINDINGS

SOUTH CENTRAL COAST PRIORITY SECTORS



Under California Jobs First, these five sectors represent strategic priorities for the South Central Coast due to their **projected growth** and importance to the **regional innovation ecosystem**. Collectively, the five Jobs First sectors represent:



SHARED WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Cross-Sector Challenges Shaping Workforce Pipelines Across the South Central Coast



HIGH COST OF LIVING

+37%

Gap between the Living Wage
and the Average Wage in the
South Central Coast

HIRING & RETENTION
CHALLENGES

38%

Share of South Central Coast
employers citing hiring and
retention as a top challenge

BELOW-AVERAGE WAGES

-24%

Gap between the South Central
Coast average wage and the
statewide average wage

OCCUPATIONAL PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

A Framework-Informed Process of Prioritizing Regional Investments by Occupation



Identified ~20 priority occupations per sector using labor market data.

01



Assessed job quality, advancement potential, and automation exposure.

02



Conducted employer surveys and stakeholder interviews.

03



Identified emerging and cross-sector skills needs based on stakeholder input.

04



AEROSPACE & DEFENSE HIRING CHALLENGES

01

Demographic Shifts

02

Specialized Skills and Requirements

03

Federal Contracting Cycles

04

Regional Employment Clusters

CLEAN ECONOMY HIRING CHALLENGES

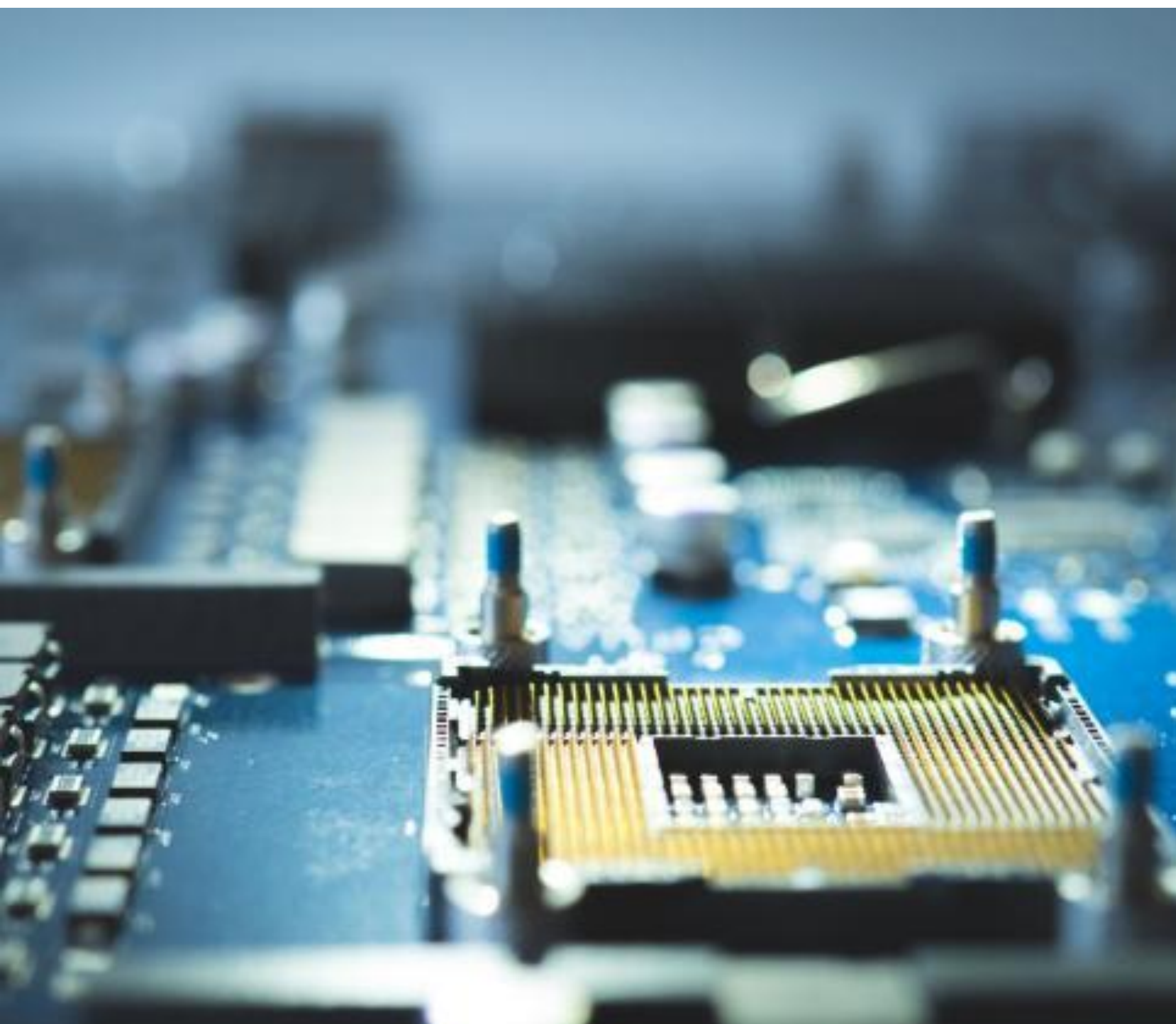
01 Rapid Technological Change

02 Infrastructure Constraints

03 Emerging Roles in Nuclear and Wind

04 Permitting and Regulatory Challenges





HIGH-TECH HIRING CHALLENGES

01

Rapid Technological Change

02

Specialized Skills for Advanced Roles

03

Competitive Regional Talent Landscape

04

Foundational Entry-Level Skills Gaps

LIFE SCIENCES HIRING CHALLENGES

01

Regional Industry Contraction

02

Specialized Skills and Requirements

03

High Training Infrastructure Costs

04

Regulatory and Compliance Requirements





WORKING LANDS & WATER HIRING CHALLENGES

01 High Concentration of Low-Wage Jobs

02 Immigration Enforcement Challenges

03 Limited Awareness of High-Wage Jobs

04 Barriers to Access

SHARED OCCUPATIONAL NEEDS

These occupations emerged as shared regional priorities based on regional employment footprint, skills requirements, and advancement potential.

CURRENT PRIORITIES



Welders



Industrial Machinery
Mechanics



Electrical and
Electronic Assemblers

EMERGING PRIORITIES



Electrical
Technicians



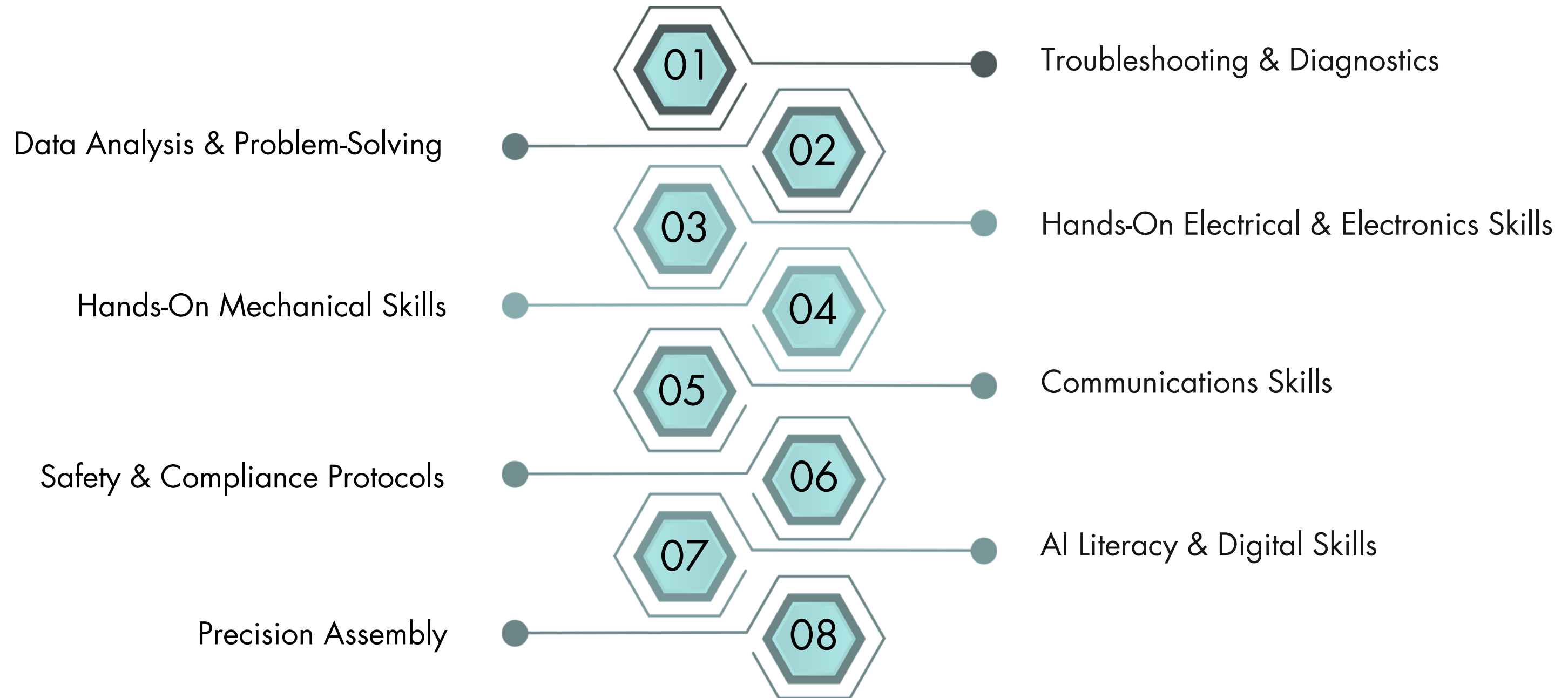
Data Scientists and
Data Analysts*

* These occupations generally require a four-year degree at entry.



SHARED SKILLS NEEDS

Shared Skills Underpinning Priority Occupations across the Five Priority Sectors





AEROSPACE & DEFENSE SKILLS NEEDS

HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS

- Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians
- CNC Tool Programmers and Operators

EMERGING OCCUPATIONS

- Airframe and Powerplant Technicians
- Aviation Maintenance Technicians
- Avionics Technicians

EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • AI Literacy and Digital Skills | • Precision Assembly |
| • Blueprint Reading | • Precision Measurement |
| • Data Analysis | • Troubleshooting and Diagnostics |

CLEAN ECONOMY SKILLS NEEDS



HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS

- Carpenters
- Electricians
- HVAC Technicians
- Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters



EMERGING OCCUPATIONS

- Electrical Technicians
- Energy Auditors
- Environmental Remediation Technicians
- Solar Panel Recycling and Maintenance Technicians



EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

- Building Electrification Installation
- Climate-Smart Agriculture Planning
- Fleet Electrification (Data Analytics)
- Hands-on Electrical Troubleshooting
- Home Energy Advising
- Solar Panel Recycling & Maintenance

HIGH-TECH SKILLS NEEDS

HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATION

- Computer User Support Specialists

EMERGING OCCUPATION

- Computer Network Support Specialists

EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

- Foundational Job Readiness Skills
- Hands-On Work Experience
- AI Tool Expertise





LIFE SCIENCES SKILLS NEEDS

HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS

- Dental Laboratory Technicians
- Medical and Clinical Lab Technicians
- Phlebotomists

EMERGING OCCUPATION

- Medical Assistants

EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

- Foundational Job Readiness Skills
- Regulatory & Compliance Knowledge
- AI Tool Expertise

WORKING LANDS & WATER SKILLS NEEDS



HIGH-PRIORITY OCCUPATION

- Agricultural Equipment Operators

EMERGING OCCUPATION

- Farm Equipment Technicians

EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

- Cloud Data Systems
- Communications and Relationship Management
- Data Analytics
- Hands-On Technical Skills
- Marketing
- STEM Foundations

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Employer Demand Signals, Workforce Constraints, and Partnership Interest

RISING DEMAND

- Nearly 60% of employers across Aerospace & Defense and Clean Economy predict 12-month headcount growth.

TALENT SHORTAGES

- Talent shortages are top-of-mind for 26% of Aerospace & Defense employers and 19% of Clean Economy employers.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- While 93% of employers in both sectors express strong interest in expanding job readiness and work-based learning, less than half partner with community colleges or workforce development boards to recruit, hire, or train workers.



PART 3.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS



IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PARTNERS

Regional Alignment and Talent Pipeline Shifts

- **Stronger regional coordination** is needed to reduce overlaps in program design, build shared talent pipelines, and ensure curriculum relevance amidst rapid technological change.
- **Shrinking K–12 enrollments** increase the need to serve adult learners, incumbent workers, and re-entry populations, who constitute a growing share of the regional talent pipeline.
- **Cross-regional pathways** with Silicon Valley, Monterey Bay, and Los Angeles R&D hubs are essential to support shared work-based learning programs and training facilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PARTNERS

Program Design Considerations

- **Training programs should incorporate cross-cutting skills** and emerging technologies to maximize investment impact and build regional capacity across priority sectors.
- **Programs should incorporate targeted supports** for underserved populations to ensure equitable access to higher-wage career pathways.
- **Continuous, up-to-date regional workforce intelligence** is needed to maintain alignment of education programs with evolving employer skills needs.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PARTNERS

STRENGTHEN CAREER PATHWAYS AND JOB QUALITY

- Strengthen programs supporting pathways with clear career progression.
- Scale high-value trades and technical programs.
- Support job quality through intentional program design.

EXPAND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

- Incorporate wraparound supports and flexible training delivery models.

FUTURE-PROOF AND ALIGN PROGRAMS TO EMPLOYER NEEDS

- Incorporate AI literacy and cross-cutting foundational skills modules.
- Offer job readiness courses as a prerequisite for work-based learning.
- Streamline and unify employer outreach and engagement.

NEXT STEPS

- **Assess advisory board structures** to reduce duplication across programs and subregions while adhering to statutory requirements (e.g., California Education Code, Perkins V)
- **Re-evaluate employer engagement metrics and outcomes** to ensure alignment with regional and statewide goals to increase the number of: WBL participants, students in apprenticeship programs, number of WDBs or EDOs in an active partnership, and number of employers engaged through employer engagement liaisons
- **Convene regional community college leaders** to create a more unified strategic plan to address current and emerging workforce needs across sectors, but particularly within Aerospace & Defense and Clean Economy, as they have the largest workforce opportunity and impact all counties in the region
- **Align efforts across other regional community college initiatives** related to apprenticeship development in Advanced Manufacturing/Aerospace Manufacturing, as well creating K-12 pipelines and stronger awareness of priority sectors



PART 4. Q&A

THANK YOU.



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