



# Executive Summary Report

As part of its ambitious Adult Learner Network initiative, the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD) launched its annual Student Journey Mapping (SJM) workshop series in 2022.

## Overview

The workshops help Missouri higher education institutions learn about utilizing SJM, understand their adult learners' barriers to accessing and completing postsecondary education, and develop action plans to eliminate those barriers. SJM workshops are critical to achieving Missouri's attainment goal: 60% of working-age Missourians will have a postsecondary credential by 2030.

SJM is a continuous improvement tool that allows institutions to visualize processes from a learners' perspective, identify barriers in those processes, and then develop action plans to solve those barriers. As part of the SJM workshops, MDHEWD partnered with The DeBruce Foundation to commission a research study and report to be completed regarding the effectiveness of SJM and the continued action plans on campuses so that future iterations of SJM may be improved and enhanced through key learnings.

## Factors of Success

Through the SJM workshops and continuing projects that originated from these workshops, participating institutions learned several key continuous factors of success to ensure projects kept moving forward and accomplished their goals:

- 1 Student Journey Maps (SJMs) be revised as new information is learned.
- 2 SJM teams must seek more input and continue new learnings.
- 3 SJM teams must continue meetings and stay focused amidst many conflicting priorities.
- 4 Institutions must choose effective leaders for the SJM teams who are energetic and able to keep projects moving forward, and institutional leadership must be bought into the value of SJM.

## Challenges

With the complexity surrounding postsecondary education today, many factors prove challenging for institutions to keep SJM projects moving forward:

Staff turnover. Postsecondary education today is struggling with higher-than-expected staff turnover, making it difficult to ensure project cohesion.

Engagement from collaborating partners. With high staff turnover, priorities shift, and staff are often spread thin, making sustained focus difficult.

Time, resources, and commitment. Many institutions, coming off the back of COVID-19 and current public doubt in the value of higher education, are struggling with the time, resources, and commitment to engage in transformational change on their campuses.

Recognizing current institutional resource constraints, MDHEWD launched these workshops and continued support resources beyond the workshops as a springboard for institutions to have the time, space, and resources to begin this transformational work in serving their adult learners. For institutions, it is critical that there be a willingness to address difficult questions, the needed time and resources are allocated for the work, and the institution and its leadership are committed to the process and to the continued achievement of its adult learners for SJM projects to be successful. Through these sustained efforts, institutions may further continuous improvement efforts on campus and create campus cultures focused on increasing:

