Workforce Development Ecosystem Map – PHASE 1: Summary Report

The Workforce Development Ecosystem Map Phase 1 offers a visual representation of workforce development organizations, programs, and resources available in Polk, Dallas, and Warren counties. The static map is designed for workforce development professionals, providing them with a visual tool to understand and navigate the complex network of entities that support workforce development.

Goals:
- Develop a static map that reflects the local workforce development landscape (a "snapshot in time").
- Enable workforce development professionals to easily identify relevant components (organizations, programs, and services).
- Support the strategic evaluation, long-term improvement, and sustainability of the workforce ecosystem.

Methodology:
A phased research approach was used in Phase 1, incorporating stakeholder engagement, research, data collection, and analysis.

1. **Stakeholder Identification and Engagement:**
   Objective: Understand the local workforce ecosystem through diverse stakeholder perspectives.

   - Consulted with Clark-Fox Family Foundation (St. Louis, MO) on the development of a similar ecosystem map for their region.
   - Consulted with the Capital Crossroads Regional Council, Greater Des Moines Partnership Talent Development Board, and the DSM Workforce Collaborative to gather their perspectives on workforce needs, programs, and key gaps.
   - Formed a task force with industry experts, educators, and community leaders.
   - Conducted one-on-one expert meetings for deeper insights into career pathways.

2. **Research and Data Collection:**
   Objective: Conduct a landscape analysis of workforce development programs/organizations.
   - Reviewed public data from local organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies.

- Gathered data through direct engagement with stakeholders.

3. **Mapping the Ecosystem:**
   Objective: Create a visual map representing key sectors (industry, education, government, community) and categorize organizations/programs.

   - Designed the map's architecture in collaboration with the task force and expert stakeholders.
   - Conducted thematic analysis to identify coding structure and placement of workforce development ecosystem components (organizations and programs) on the ecosystem map.
   - Classified components according to "best fit" based on their role, audience, career stages, services, and collaborations.

4. **Database Creation and Classification:**
   Objective: Compile a comprehensive database of components to track data and complement the visual representation of the static ecosystem map.

   - Collected detailed data on each component featured on the map and applied a systematic coding and categorization process for efficient retrieval and analysis.
   - Components were categorized by primary and secondary functions, target audiences, and service types. The development of the classification system enabled accurate coding of the diverse roles of each entity, ensuring the map reflects the most appropriate "best fit."

5. **Closing Out Phase 1:**
   Objective: Ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement to finalize the map and database.

   - Complete final edits and updates by addressing all feedback and closing feedback loops.
   - Schedule follow-up meetings to discuss the direction of Phase 2 and strategies for long-term sustainability.

Once complete, Phase 1 will have successfully created a foundational workforce development ecosystem map, enabling workforce development professionals in Polk, Dallas, and Warren counties to identify and evaluate available resources. Phase 2 will focus on ensuring long-term usability and impact.