

A photograph of a scientist in a white lab coat and safety glasses, wearing gloves and working in a laboratory. The scientist is pouring liquid from a small vial into a multi-well plate. The background shows laboratory equipment, including a rack of multi-well plates and a pipette. The entire image has a blue tint.

# Middle-Skills Pathways in Chicago: Health Sciences Sector Analysis

# HS Middle-Skills Pathways in Chicago Overview

- Good occupations in this sector require or involve going through a community college and AAS program, but there exist many occupations for entry-level industry credentials and college certificate programs.
- Key AAS programs are offered at most community colleges in the Chicagoland area, creating competition for City Colleges of Chicago.
- Nursing is technically a middle-skills role, but most registered nurses now have or enter the profession with a bachelor's degree.



# HS Priority Occupation and Promising Credential Areas

Middle Skill Credential Area	Occupations	Typical Entry Education	Chicagoland Wage \$/hr	Chicagoland Projected Growth (10 yr.)	Annual Chicagoland Job Openings	Term
Nursing	Nursing Assistant	Postsecondary Certificate	\$13.90	4%	3,072	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
	Practical Nurse	Postsecondary Certificate	\$27.62	0%	649	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
	Registered Nurse.	Bachelor's	\$36.95	14%	4,046	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
Hygienists, Therapists and Therapy Assistants	Respiratory Therapists	Associate Degree	\$29.50	2%	163	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
	Physical Therapy Assistants	Associate Degree	\$30.45	2%	306	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
	Occupational Therapy Assistants	Associate Degree	\$31.97	2%	153	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
	Dental Hygienists	Associate Degree	\$36.18	8%	236	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
Health Science Assistants and Records Managers	Medical Records & Health Information Tech	Postsecondary Certificate	\$21.74	3%	240	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
	Medical Assistant	Postsecondary Certificate	\$17.67	13%	1,068	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
Health Technologists & Technicians	Radiologic Technologist	Associate Degree	\$31.54	1%	178	<b>High Priority Occupation</b>
	Pharmacy Technician	High School + On-the-Job Training	\$15.81	6%	724	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
	Patient Care Tech (Phlebotomist)	Postsecondary Certificate	\$17.39	13%	301	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
	EKG Technician (Phlebotomist)	Postsecondary Certificate	\$17.39	13%	301	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>
	Phlebotomist	Postsecondary Certificate	\$17.39	13%	301	<b>Gateway Occupation</b>

# Overview of Private Training Landscape

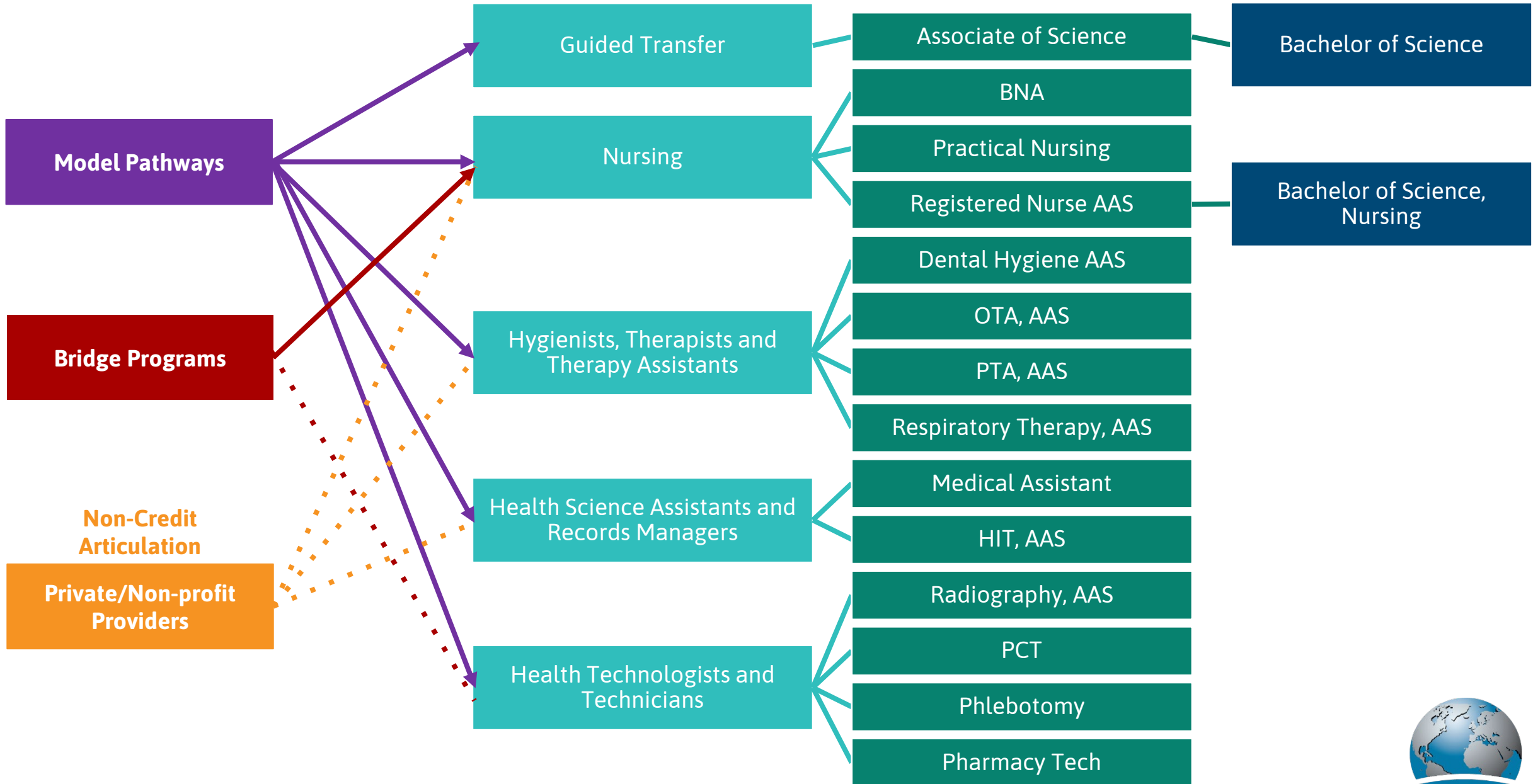
Based on [Chicagoland CareerPathways](#), the private training landscape features a vast majority of training and private programs that place people into “Gateway Occupations” of MA, PCT, etc.

- All meet in-demand criterion for High Priority Occupations, but not Living Wage
- For individuals in these positions to improve their salary potential, they typically need to return to school and seek out higher-earning nursing qualifications or pivot to the administrative side and seek roles such as Medical and Health Services Managers:
  - 63% of employees in these roles have at least a bachelor' degree or higher
  - Bachelor’s degree becoming the entry-level requirement



Pre-College Landscape

CCC Programs



# Recommended Improvement Strategies for HS

- A. Expand program offerings leading to more middle-skills Technologists or high-end technicians, e.g., Medical Laboratory or Cardiovascular Technologist.
- B. Create the structures to move other typically non-stackable roles with industry certifications or licenses (e.g., Pharmacy Technician, Phlebotomist, Medical Assistant) into more advanced administrative roles and clinical functions.
  - Working with employers, create apprenticeship/“earn and learn” opportunities for these employees to move into more advanced non-nursing administrative or clinical roles.
- C. Ensure entry-level assistants (CNA’s, Medical Assistants) aren’t “stopping out” at these roles.
  - Build capacity of partner nonprofits to provide “alumni career pathway” supports to individuals employed in these occupations. Pilot these programs through philanthropy but ultimately integrate them into WIOA structures.
  - Consider replicating early childhood’s “Gateways to Opportunity Registry” model (including registration, transcript reviews, access to informational sessions and training, access to scholarships) in Health Sciences.

