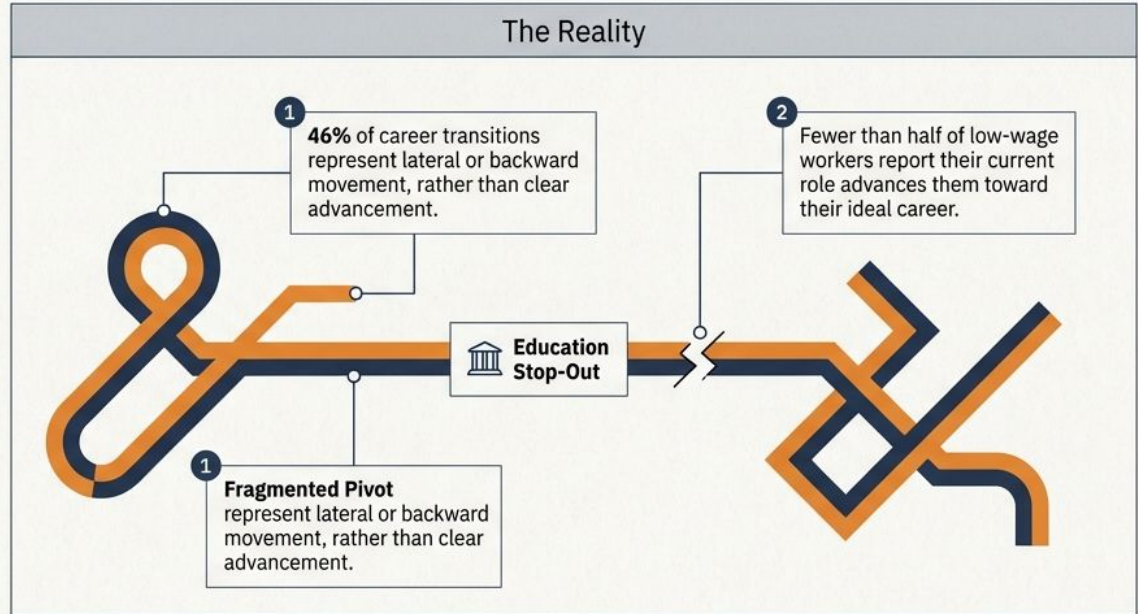
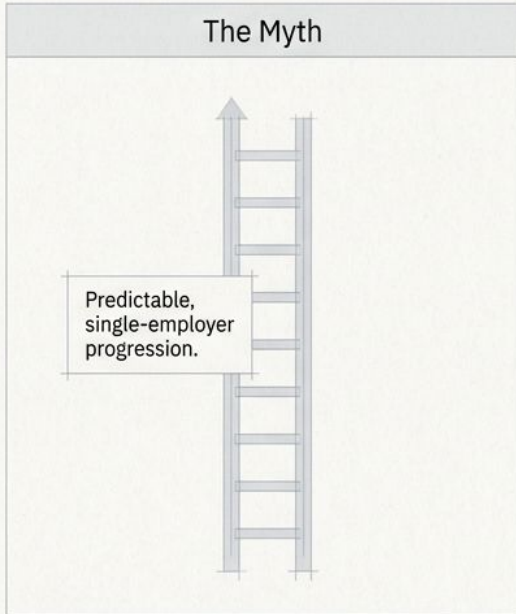


# Navigating Careers Without Pathways

Rethinking economic mobility in a fragmented labor market.

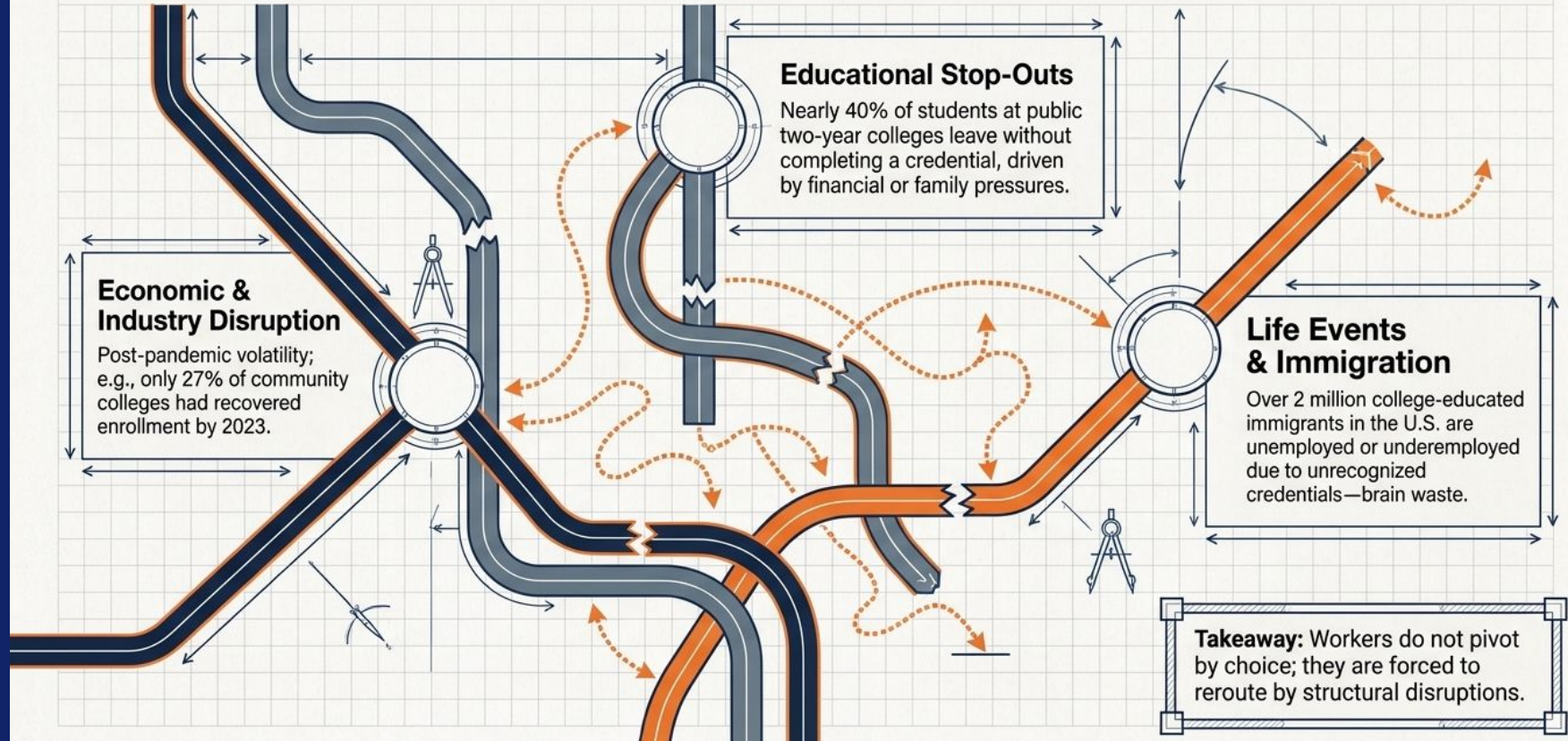


# The linear career ladder is dead.

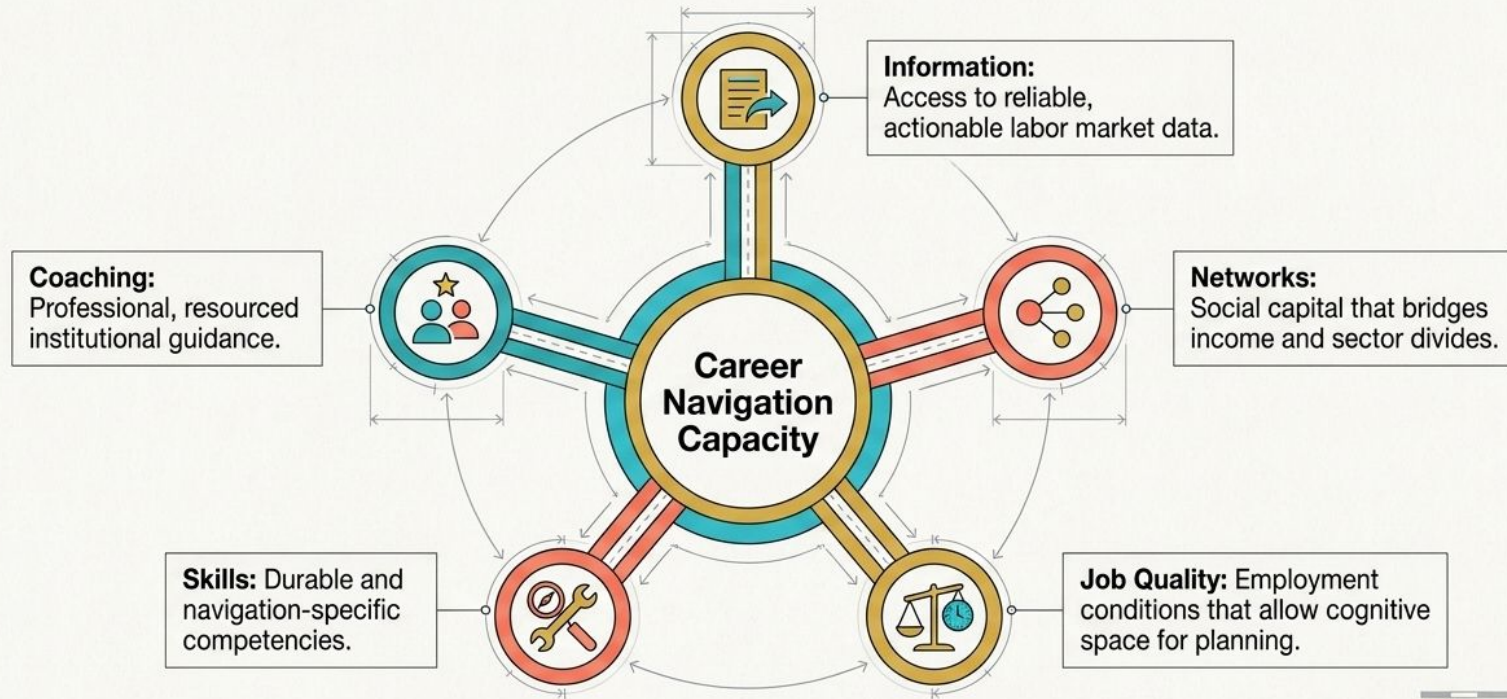


Career mobility is no longer a one-time plan; it is an ongoing, dynamic process of navigation requiring continuous sensemaking and adaptation.

# External shocks mandate continuous career pivoting.

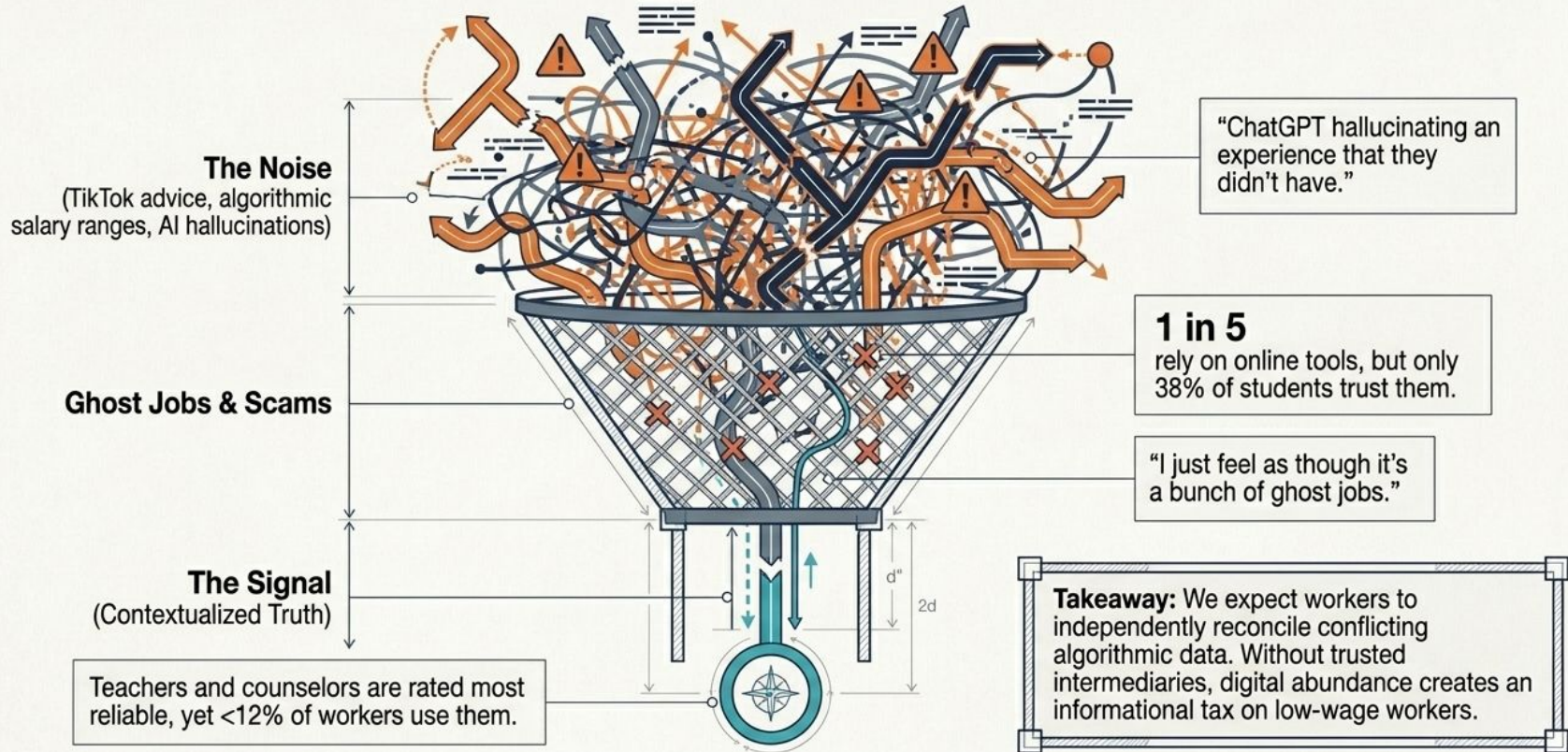


# The Navigation Ecosystem: Five conditions dictate mobility.












Takeaway: Navigation capacity is not solely individual motivation. It is heavily constrained or enabled by the presence of these five systemic infrastructure pillars.

# Information abundance exacerbates inequality without institutional clarity.



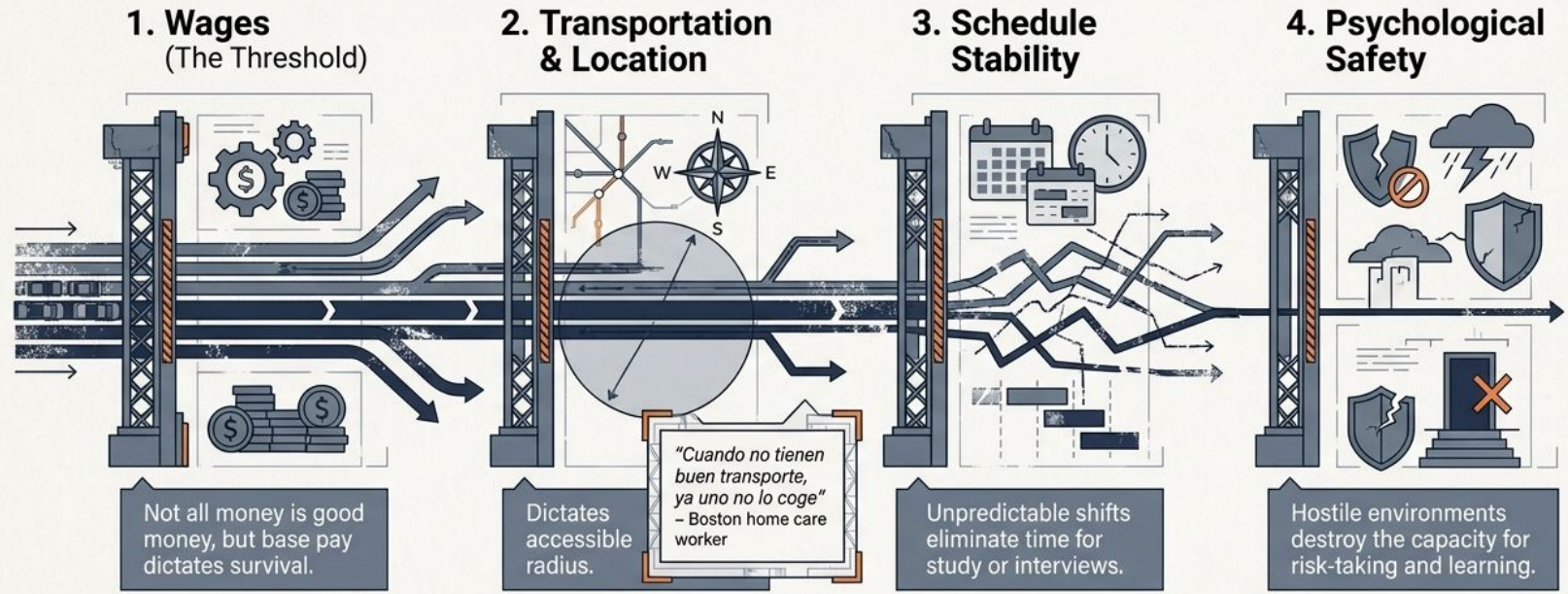
# Stratified networks trap workers in occupational clusters.

## The Social Capital Matrix

Network Type		Primary Value	Limitation & Impact
1	<b>Strong Ties</b> (Family/Friends) 	Emotional support, immediate job placement. 	Leads to occupational clustering. (Data: 31% of workers rely primarily on family/friends). 
2	<b>Weak Ties</b> (Cross-Sector Networks) 	Exposure to new industries and workplace norms. 	Rare for low-wage workers; hard to access without structured institutional bridges. 
3	<b>Mentorship</b> (Transformative Capital) 	Validation, accountability, and tailored redirection. 	Highly reliant on luck or proximity to exceptional individuals (e.g., teachers, pastors). 

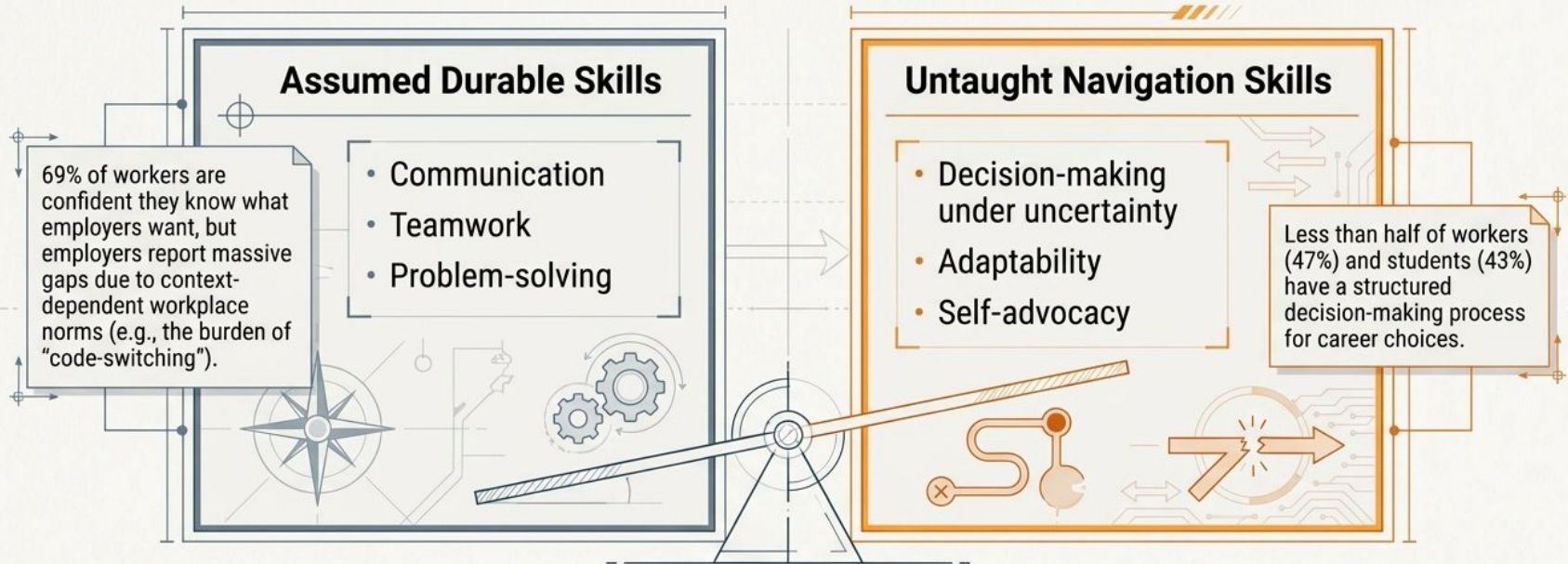
**Takeaway: Securing a job through a friend provides stability, but cross-income “weak ties” and deep mentorship are required to break the ceiling of occupational segregation.**

# The Navigation Constraint Funnel: Survival precedes strategy.



**Takeaway:** We often treat career planning as a lack of ambition, ignoring that **unstable schedules** and **low wages** literally **starve the cognitive capacity** required for **long-term navigation**.

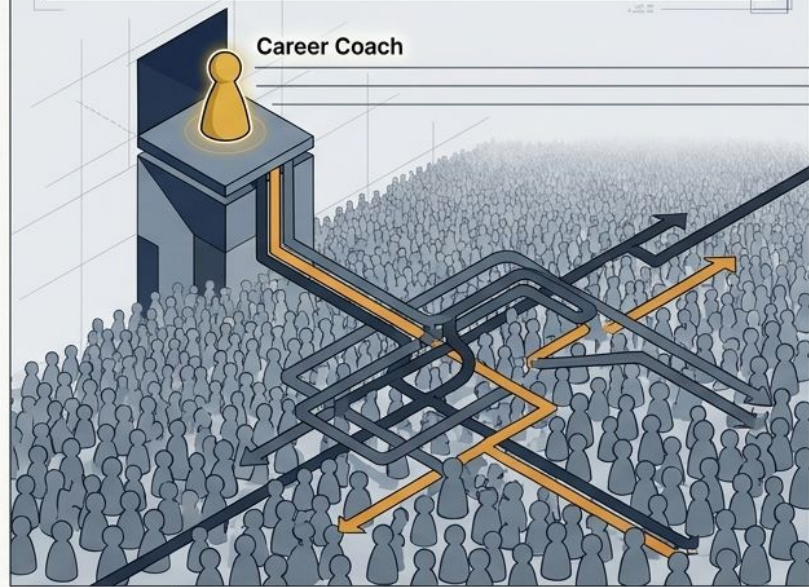
# The Missing Curriculum: We don't teach workers how to navigate.



**Takeaway: Navigation competencies are developed entirely through costly trial and error. They must be embedded into core educational curricula, not relegated to optional workshops.**

# The Overloaded Guide: Institutional guidance is structurally outmatched.

**1 Coach to 4,700 Students**



## Scope Creep

Coaches must manage SNAP E&T, housing, and childcare crises before discussing careers.

## Data Deficit

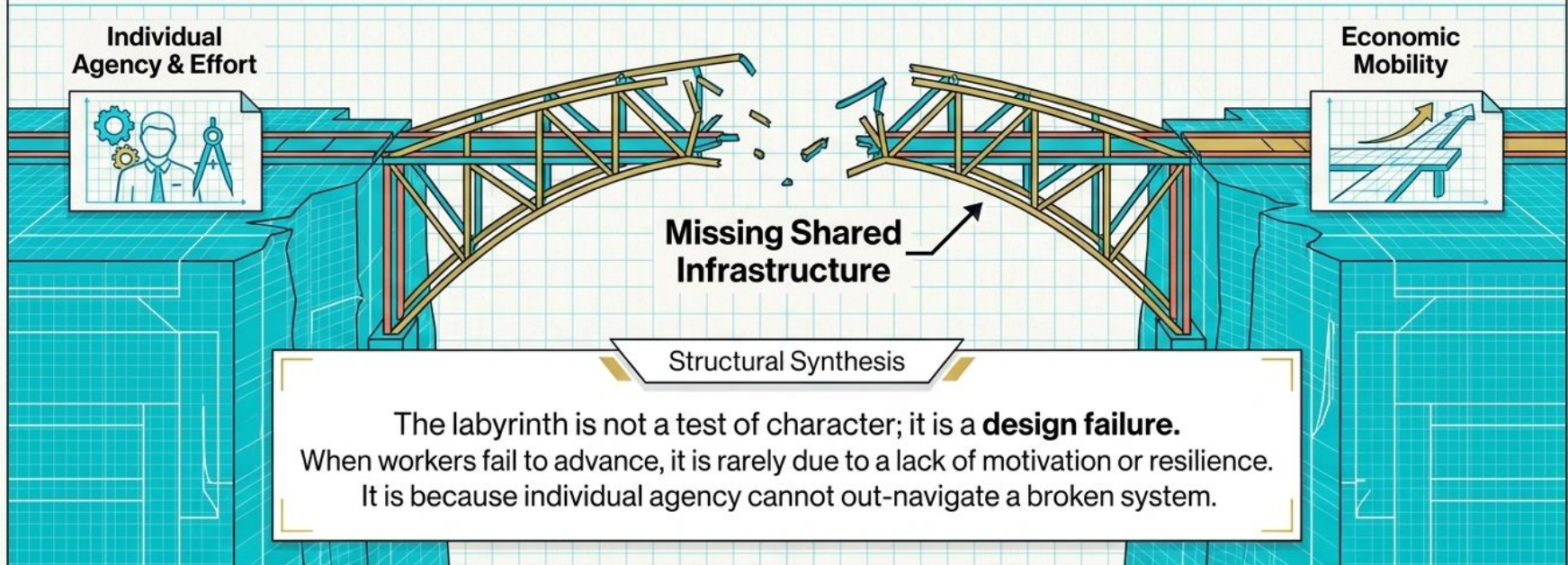
Forced to rely on the same opaque platforms (LinkedIn, Indeed) as their clients.

## Siloed Systems

Disconnected from academic faculty who hold valuable industry connections.

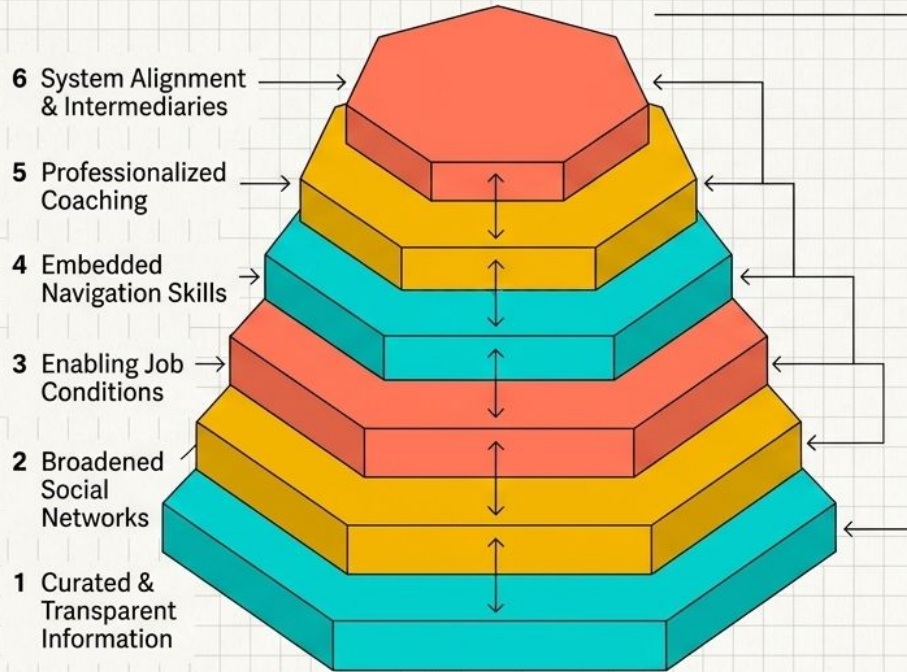
**Takeaway:** Effective coaching requires psychological safety and deep context, functions that are impossible to execute at current caseloads.

# The Structural Deficit: We are treating systemic failure as an individual shortcoming.



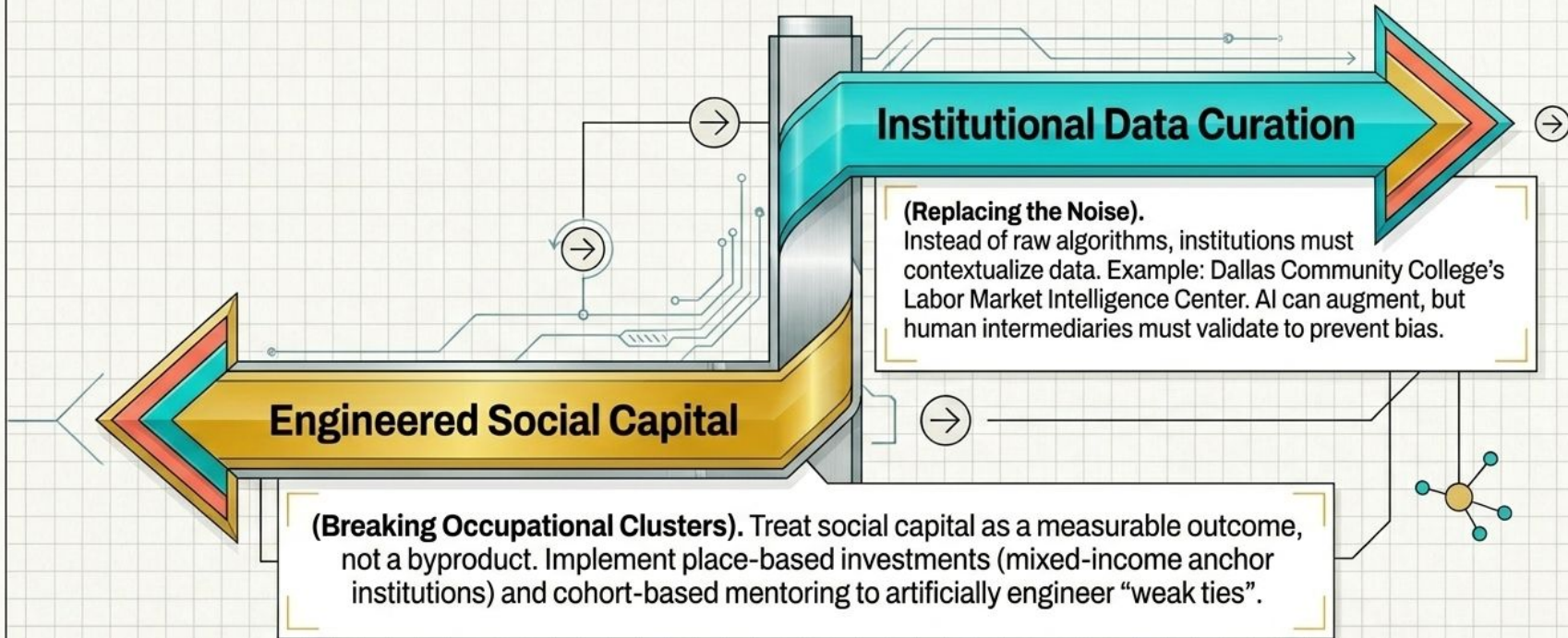
Takeaway: Mobility in a fragmented labor market requires shared infrastructure. We must stop asking individuals to map the labyrinth, and instead build a functional transit system.

# The Infrastructure Blueprint: Building navigation capacity



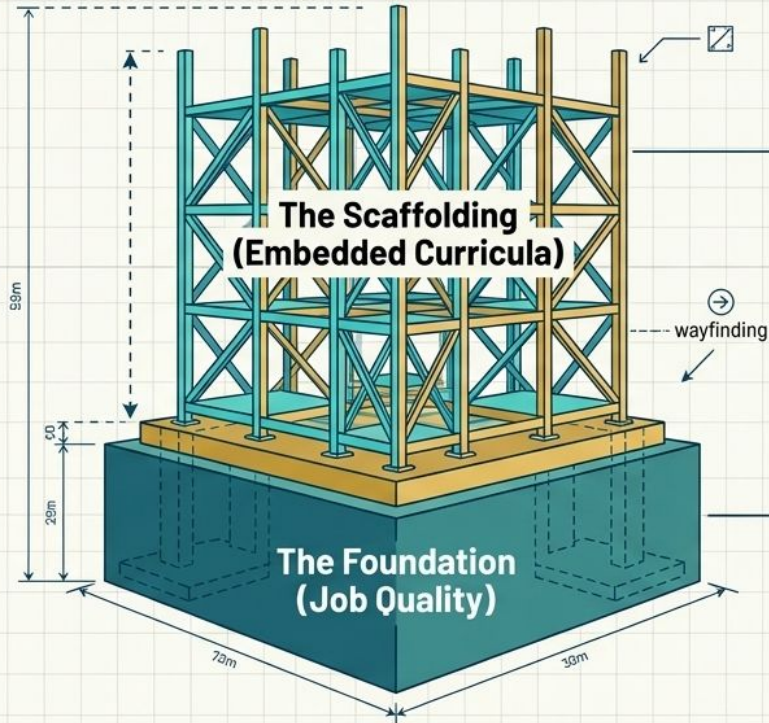
**Takeaway: These solutions cannot be cherry-picked. Incremental improvements in job postings mean nothing if scheduling instability prevents workers from interviewing. Systemic alignment is mandatory.**

# Blueprint 1 & 2: Curating Truth and Engineering Exposure.



**Takeaway:** Information and networks must be actively engineered by trusted institutions to bridge the divide between low-wage workers and high-growth sectors.

# Blueprint 3 & 4: Securing the Baseline and Teaching the Map.

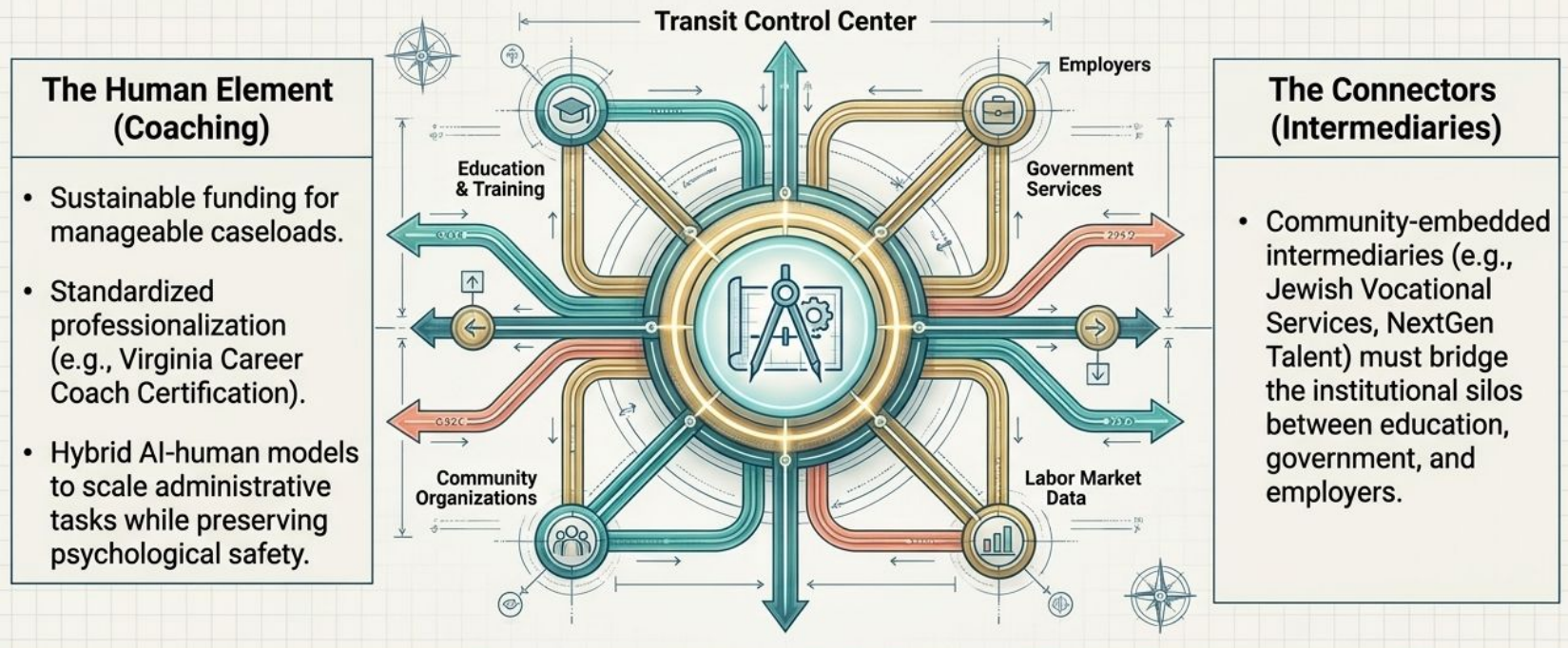


Navigation skills—decision-making under uncertainty, self-advocacy, guided reflection—must be formally assessed — core competencies, integrated at key transition points, not optional add-ons.

Minimum thresholds for wages, predictable scheduling, and wraparound supports (childcare, transit). Programs must prioritize placement into roles that meet these baseline criteria.

**Takeaway: We must build an economic floor that allows for cognitive planning, while simultaneously teaching the tactical skills required to navigate volatility.**

# Blueprint 5 & 6: Professionalizing the Guides and Aligning the System.



**Takeaway: Without coordinated intermediary organizations and professionalized coaching, the burden of mapping the fragmented labor market falls entirely on the worker.**

# From Trial-and-Error to Shared Infrastructure.

SHARED SERVICES ROUTE

As labor markets grow more dynamic and less predictable, mobility will depend less on individual resilience and more on the systems built to support it.

- ✓ Acknowledge the fragmented reality: Careers are pivots, not ladders.
- ✓ Address the five systemic constraints collectively, not in isolation.
- ✓ Invest heavily in the connective tissue: coaches, intermediaries, and curated data.

**Final Statement:** Without shared infrastructure, economic opportunity will continue to depend more on luck and circumstance than on effort and ability. **We must build the map.**

