

# REALIZING INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY IN WIOA

## Implementing the Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans

Brooke DeRenzis and Bryan Wilson  
July 2016



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction.....	3
Key Findings .....	4
I. The Planning Process .....	4
II. Plan Structure and Format.....	5
III. Sector Partnerships.....	7
IV. Career Pathways .....	8
V. Cross-Agency Data and Measurement.....	11
VI. Job-Driven Investments.....	15
VII. Strategies for Youth .....	15
Conclusion.....	16

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shortly after the July 2014 passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), National Skills Coalition (NSC) published, [Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: A Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans](#). The Playbook offered recommendations on how states could use WIOA plans to establish strategies for closing the skill gap and helping workers and businesses succeed. The Playbook's recommendations addressed the state planning process, as well as four key strategies that are supported by WIOA: sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments.

This report provides examples drawn from a selected sample of 14 states<sup>1</sup> of how new plans address the recommendations included in NSC's Playbook.

### KEY FINDINGS

**PLANNING PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS:** The state should engage in an extensive planning process with broad stake-holder engagement. Plans should be visionary and broadly cover all the major strategies and actions to prepare middle-skill workers.

**Findings:** The planning processes were uneven, with broad, transparent processes apparent in some but not all states. Some plans are very visionary and describe a comprehensive workforce development system, while others are more compliance oriented, just answering the questions posed by the federal departments. In reviewing the types of plans submitted by all 50 states, only 14 state plans include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, 9 include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, and 6 include career and technical education.

**SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RECOMMENDATIONS:** The state plan should describe the key elements of sector partnerships that the state will support, and explain how the state will administer and fund a strategy that supports the development, convening, and implementation of local area sector partnerships.

**Findings:** WIOA appears to have moved the needle forward on sector partnerships. Multiple states with existing sector partnership policies indicate they will be expanding support for sector partnerships as a fundamental way of engaging employers and ensuring that training is job-driven. Some of those without an existing sector partnership program describe how they will create one.

**CAREER PATHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS:** The state plan should explain the policies and resources the state will use to create career pathways, including effective adult education approaches, and explain how the state will link career pathways and sector partnerships.

**Findings:** Many plans lack detail on the steps states will take to establish career pathways. Most plans pay only required attention to integrated education and training. More could have been done to discuss how programs in addition to WIOA programs can play an important part in career pathway systems. States with strong sector partnership policies, however, typically describe the role the partnerships will play in guiding career pathways.

<sup>1</sup> We reviewed the state plans of: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington.

---

**CROSS-PROGRAM DATA AND MEASUREMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** The state plan should describe a comprehensive system linking data across workforce and education agencies; measuring outcomes using common metrics; providing a full count of industry-recognized credentials; and offering training provider scorecards for consumers, and dashboards and supply and demand reports for policymakers.

---

**Findings:** State plans include new steps for linking data across programs and linking participant data with wage records; the development of cross-program data tools such as supply and demand reports, and dashboards; and the use of common measures for programs beyond the six core programs in WIOA. However, there is not much discussion of scorecards to provide potential consumers with information on local program results; and state plans generally do not describe the process they will use to identify industry-valued credentials.

---

**JOB-DRIVEN INVESTMENTS RECOMMENDATION:** The state plan should describe how the state will invest in training directly connected to jobs.

---

**Finding:** Many states outline the steps they will take to expand apprenticeship, especially to non-traditional industries and occupations.

---

**YOUTH:** The Playbook did not call-out youth for special recommendations. Youth, however, can be well-served by the key strategies emphasized in the Playbook.

---

**Finding:** Multiple state plans emphasize youth apprenticeship and other forms of work-based learning for youth.

---

## INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the July 2014 passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), National Skills Coalition (NSC) published, *Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: A Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans*. Under WIOA, state workforce development boards must assist their governors in developing a state workforce plan. The *Playbook* offered recommendations on how states could use WIOA plans to establish strategies for closing the skill gap and helping workers and businesses succeed. The *Playbook's* recommendations addressed the state planning process, as well as four key strategies that are supported by WIOA: sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments.

As of April 2016, all states completed and submitted their new plans to the federal government. Based on a review of 14 selected state plans<sup>2</sup>, this report provides examples of how new plans address the recommendations included in NSC's *Playbook*. It is intended to help a broad set of stakeholders reflect on their state's intended strategies and critical implementation issues. Stakeholders can also use this report to think about potential improvements or next steps, since WIOA requires states to review and modify plans in two years. In fact, state plans are living documents that can be modified at any time.

---

<sup>2</sup> We reviewed the state plans of: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington.

## KEY FINDINGS

Some trends are apparent in the 14 state plans that we reviewed. WIOA seems to have already moved the needle forward on sector partnerships, apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities, and cross-program data and measurement. Multiple states with existing sector partnership policies indicate they will be expanding support for sector partnerships as a fundamental way of engaging employers and ensuring that training is job-driven. Some of those without an existing sector partnership program describe how they will create one. In regard to apprenticeship, many states outline the steps they will take to expand apprenticeship, especially to non-traditional industries and occupations. Multiple state plans include youth apprenticeship and other forms of work-based learning for youth. In regard to cross-program data and measurement, State plans include new steps for linking data across programs and linking participant data with wage records; the development of cross-program data tools such as supply and demand reports, and dashboards; and the use of common measures for programs beyond the six core programs in WIOA.

Not all elements discussed in NSC's *Playbook*, however, are widely apparent in the new state plans that we reviewed. Across states, there was variability both in the process for creating plans and in the scope of plans. The planning processes themselves were uneven, with broad, transparent processes apparent in some but not all states. Some plans are very visionary and describe a comprehensive workforce development system, while others are more compliance oriented, just answering the questions posed by the federal departments.

The extent to which states used combined plans to describe a comprehensive workforce system also varied. In reviewing the types of plans submitted by all 50 states, only 14 state plans include TANF, 9 include SNAP E&T, and 6 include career and technical education. More could have been done to discuss how state programs in addition to WIOA programs can play an important part in career pathway systems.

Many of the state plans missed the opportunity to discuss critical new opportunities in WIOA for integrated education and training, consumer scorecards, and identifying industry-recognized credentials. Most plans pay only required attention to integrated education and training. There is not much discussion of scorecards to provide potential consumers with information on local program results; and state plans generally do not describe the process they will use to identify industry-valued credentials.

Progress, however, was made. The following review provides examples of how state plans address the recommendations included in NSC's *Playbook*

## I. THE PLANNING PROCESS

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION:** The state workforce development board and state and local stakeholders should engage in an extensive planning process that makes possible broad and authentic stake-holder engagement.

While states planning processes greatly varied, some states used WIOA planning to engage a broad set of stakeholders on the state's workforce plan. New Jersey, Washington, and California all provide examples of states with robust WIOA planning processes.

Early in the WIOA planning process, [New Jersey](#) embarked on a WIOA planning process focused on sector partnerships, career pathways, job-driven training, and cross-program data, among other key issues. New Jersey employed a variety of methods to engage key stakeholders throughout the state, including a statewide WIOA conference attended by nearly 300 people.

Washington State also implemented an inclusive planning process. The State Board established a steering committee co-chaired by business and labor representatives to guide the WIOA planning process. It also created three committees consisting of state and local agency representatives and other stakeholders to develop ideas for the plan. In addition to these committees, the state board held eight public forums around the state attended by over 400 people several months in advance of the plan's due date. Thirty-five stakeholders participated in weekly writing team meetings to draft sections of the plan. The draft plan was widely available for public comment and seventy-five comments were received from fourteen different entities.

California's Workforce Development Board established a WIOA Implementation Committee and multiple workgroups to develop the draft plan. The Board held a "Roadshow for Public Input," a series of six regional events in partnership with the California Workforce Association and local workforce boards. Local boards invited board members, partners in their local workforce systems, and representatives from business and labor. The Board adopted a draft plan in December 2015 that was available for public review and comment for six weeks.

## II. PLAN STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON COMMON VISION AND GOALS:** The state plan should clearly describe the state's vision and goals for preparing a skilled workforce and meeting employer needs for middle-skill workers.

State plans provide an opportunity for states to fully commit to a vision of a skilled workforce that meets employer needs, and to acknowledge the central role that middle-skill training plays in meeting those needs. California and Minnesota both provide examples of states plans with visions of workforce systems that meet workers' and employers' needs.

*California's plan* is based on the state's goal to produce a million "middle-skill" industry-valued and recognized postsecondary credentials between 2017 and 2027 (p. 12). The plan notes that much of the job growth in the next decade will be in middle-skill occupations, which require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree and provide opportunities for economic mobility. By focusing on preparing residents for middle-skill jobs, California intends to serve both populations with barriers to employment and the business community. (pp. 52-53).

Minnesota's state plan sets a vision of "a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have – or are on a path to – meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand" (p. 2). To achieve that vision, Minnesota organized its plan around the primary goals of reducing educational and employment disparities based on race or disability and building employer-led industry partnerships (p.2).

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON BROAD SCOPE:** Whether a state chooses to submit a unified or a combined state plan, the plan should broadly cover all the major strategies and actions across agencies and programs that the state will use to prepare a skilled workforce that meets employer needs.

Under WIOA, state plans must include a strategic plan that describes the state's vision, goals, and key strategies, and an operational plan that identifies steps programs will take to implement strategies. States were able to choose whether to submit a "unified" or "combined" plan. Unified plans include

operational plans for the core programs of WIOA's four titles<sup>3</sup> while combined plans additionally include an operational plan for at least one other program<sup>4</sup> States that did not submit a combined plan still had the option of describing how programs outside the four titles will contribute to achieving the state's goals and strategies.

Based on a review of all 50 state plans, just over half of the states (28) created combined plans. Fourteen state plans include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); nine plans include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T); and six plans include Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE), among other non-core programs.

Some states used combined planning to describe how multiple federal programs would contribute to their key workforce strategies. For example, [Pennsylvania's combined plan](#) includes Perkins CTE, TANF, SNAP E&T, and five other federal programs, and describes them as part of a comprehensive workforce development system focused on "jobs that pay," "schools that teach" and the skills necessary to succeed in college and careers (p. 7).

Similarly, Massachusetts' combined plan describes how TANF, SNAP E&T, and four other federal programs will work together to address the state's skill gap. The state plan was created following the establishment of the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet, which is tasked with aligning economic, workforce, and education systems to address Massachusetts' skills gap. The combined WIOA plan provides a vehicle for the Workforce Skills Cabinet to align services and activities across program partners included in the plan (pp. 40-51).

Other states submitted comprehensive unified plans. While these plans do not officially include the operational plans for additional federal programs, they do describe how workforce and education programs beyond WIOA programs will work together to achieve the state's goals. For example, California's unified plan is intended to provide a framework for aligning WIOA programs with other federal and state workforce, education, and human services programs (p. 5). It discusses how programs such as secondary and postsecondary CTE and TANF contribute to the state's key skills strategies.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON ACTIONABLE PLANS:** The operational portions of the state plan should clearly describe the "who, what, and when" of action steps that implement the state's strategies.

---

The operational portions of the state plan should be specific enough that state policymakers, states administrators, and local officials can tell who is responsible for doing what and how the pieces fit together to complete the state's strategies. Such specificity will provide accountability and help those who are responsible carry out activities in a manner consistent with the state plan.

[Pennsylvania's plan](#), for example, identifies specific steps that partners programs will take in order to carry out the state's strategies. It also identifies how the partner programs will coordinate their actions.

<sup>3</sup> The four titles of WIOA are: Title I) Workforce Development Activities, Title II) Adult Education and Literacy, Title III) Wagner-Peyser Act, and Title IV) Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>4</sup> The others may be federally required plans for: Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans Employment and Training Service, Unemployment Insurance, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Community Development Block Grant.

### III. SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

WIOA highlights sector partnerships as a key strategy for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers. A sector partnership organizes multiple employers and key stakeholders in an industry cluster into a working group that focuses on the shared goals and human resources needs of the industry cluster. An intermediary organization typically facilitates the collaboration.

Under WIOA, state plans must describe how employers will be engaged through sector partnerships. Local workforce boards must use adult and dislocated worker funds to “develop, convene, or implement” sector partnerships, and state support for local sector partnerships is one of the required activities for which state set-aside funds must be used.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION:** The state plan should describe the key elements of sector partnerships that the state will support. It should also explain how the state will administer and fund a strategy that supports the development, convening, and implementation of local area sector partnerships.

---

As described in NSC’s *Sector Partnership Policy Toolkit*, states can provide support for local sector partnerships through funding, technical assistance, and/or program initiatives, which promote sector partnerships as a key component of the state’s workforce system and set partnership criteria. Several states used their WIOA state plans to describe how they will provide these types of support to local partnerships.

For example, some states with existing sector partnership policies used the WIOA plan to describe how they will expand sector partnerships throughout the state and connect them to other key skills strategies, such as work-based learning and career pathways.

[Rhode Island’s plan](#) focuses on Real Jobs Rhode Island, an initiative to take sector partnerships to scale in all target industry clusters. All programs included in the WIOA plan are to help bring Real Jobs Rhode Island to scale, and the initiative will be the primary mechanism for employer engagement. According to the plan, Real Jobs Rhode Island, which already uses state and federal funds to provide grants to local partnerships, will additionally use WIOA governor’s reserve funds to support this effort in the future.

Colorado’s plan describes how the state will focus on enhancing and expanding the network of sector partnerships it has supported for nearly a decade (pp. 33-37). In addition to the extensive technical assistance the state already provides to partnerships, Colorado will use discretionary dollars, including WIOA governor’s reserve funds, to aid sector partnerships (p. 45, 91). With the support of the State, sector partnerships will take on “the next level” of activities--leading the creation of career pathway systems, described later in this report.

[Maryland’s plan](#) describes how sector partnerships supported by its existing sector partnership program, Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN), will be used to help identify workforce needs, create career pathways for adult education students and others, design curriculum including soft skills training, provide work-based learning, and validate industry-recognized credentials. The plan also discusses the need to bring sector partnerships to scale, noting that EARN has served 500 employers, but there are 10,000 employers in Maryland (pp. 112-115).

[Pennsylvania’s plan](#) places its Industry Partnership program at the center of of the plan’s five state goals. Specifically, it looks to use industry partnerships to expand public-private investment in skills training for targeted industry sectors and to strengthen workforce programs’ responsiveness to employer demand (p. 8). The plan states that Pennsylvania will increase state funding for sector partnerships, dedicate a portion of the WIOA governor’s reserve funding for the partnerships, and require local boards to provide funding to sector partnerships. The state will also provide technical assistance for sector partnerships and explore creating a certification program to recognize quality partnerships (pp. 8-16, 74).

According to NSC's, [Sector Partnership Policy: 50-State Scan](#), over half of the states do not have a policy in place to support local sector partnerships. Some of these states used their WIOA state plans to describe the steps they will take to establish new policies.

Minnesota set the establishment of sector partnerships as one of its two state goals. The plan explains that sector partnerships will provide a more purposeful way to engage employers, understand their shared skill needs, and connect career pathways to employment in order to expand access to jobs in key industries (p. 25).

Missouri identified the creation of sector partnerships as one of its key state strategies (pp.24-26). It will launch an effort to develop sector partnerships in the state's 10 economic development regions by providing data analysis on regional growth sectors, technical assistance, and a web-based toolkit. The state will additionally support these partnerships through policy, board and staff development, and funding.

Georgia's state plan describes a process for establishing sector partnerships in 12 regions of the state (p. 59-60). Georgia is giving local workforce boards the opportunity to participate in a Sector Skills Academy strategy session, along with core partners, training and service providers, and nonprofit and industry leaders. They will also provide webinars and data analysis to help workforce boards incorporate sector strategies into their local WIOA plans.

## IV. CAREER PATHWAYS

WIOA also promotes career pathways as a key workforce development strategy. Career pathways align and integrate education (including adult basic education and ESL), job training, counseling and support services to create accelerated pathways to postsecondary education credentials and employment in in-demand occupations.

Under WIOA, state and local boards are tasked with developing career pathways. The state plan must describe a strategy for aligning core programs and explain how different entities will support career pathways.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON CROSS-PROGRAM COLLABORATION:** The state plan should explain the roles, policies, and resources that state agencies will adopt or use to collaborate with each other and other state and local stakeholders to create career pathways.

---

States like Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and California described how different programs will work together to support career pathways.

Pennsylvania's state plan describes how the state will create career pathways by aligning education, training, counseling, and support services from secondary and postsecondary career and technical education, adult basic education, TANF, and SNAP E&T, in addition to the core programs of WIOA. The state will braid funding, integrate service delivery, and co-enroll participants whenever appropriate (pp. 8-10).

Minnesota's plan uses a career pathways system framework to describe how different federal and state programs will work together to expand opportunities for all state residents and meet business needs. The plan identifies six career pathway elements – business engagement; community engagement; customer-centered design; funding and resource needs; policy and system alignment; and system management—and describes the roles of state agencies in implementing them (pp. 33-39; 41-44). The plan also describes the state workforce board's Career Pathways Partnership. A broad-based group representing industry, state agencies, higher education, and community-based organizations, the Career

Pathways Partnership is charged with developing an operational framework to support sector-based career pathways (p. 69).

[California's plan](#) describes career pathways as an essential part of the state's framework for aligning programs. The framework includes programs administered by 12 state agencies, including CTE and social service agencies, as well as local partners.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON ADULT EDUCATION:** The state plan should describe how it will deploy effective adult education approaches as part of the state's career pathways strategy.

---

For low-skilled adults, adult education is a central component and frequently the entry-point to a career pathway. Adult education has been shown to be an effective part of career pathways when it is integrated with skills training and provided within the context of a student's career goals. Under WIOA, career pathways must include integrated education and training. Washington, Arkansas, and Minnesota all provide examples of state plans that include integrated education and training as part of a career pathway strategy.

Washington, the home of Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), places a major emphasis on integrated education and training in its plan. I-BEST is best known for pairing two instructors in the classroom – one to teach professional and technical (vocational) or credit-bearing academic content and the other to teach basic skills in areas of reading, math, writing or English language. The model also includes contextualization, enhanced students services, and articulated programs of study. [Washington's plan](#) includes several forms of I-BEST that meet students at their level of skill and prepares them to move on to the next stage. I-BEST is available at all 34 community and technical colleges (pp. 198-201).

Arkansas' state plan highlights its intention to expand its Accelerating Opportunity program. As a partnership between the adult education division and four community colleges, Accelerating Opportunity uses I-BEST's paired instructor model to help adults earn an occupational certificate while improving their basic skills. The state's adult education funds support instruction curriculum development and training while community college funds cover tuition and fees for students without a high school diploma (p. 50). The state plan describes that Arkansas intends to increase the number of adult education and community college career pathway partnerships by 300 percent over two years (p. 48).

Minnesota's state plan highlights the state's existing Pathways to Prosperity program as a key element of its career pathways system (p.45). The program, which has \$11 million in state funding in FY 2016, combines integrated education and training with career counseling, support services, and job placement assistance to adults with barriers. The state's ABE program contextualizes basic skills within occupational needs identified by businesses, and will continue to do so through participation in sector partnerships (p.44). In regard to the role that adult basic education plays in carrying out Minnesota's career pathways system, the state plan notes that ABE policies promote collaboration with other services and use success measures that include transition to postsecondary education, postsecondary credential attainment, and employment in addition to secondary diploma attainment (p. 42).

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON SUPPORT SERVICES:** The state plan should describe the types of support services and financial aid that will be available to career pathway participants.

---

Career pathways are designed to enable low-skill, low-income individuals achieve postsecondary credentials and higher paying employment; accordingly support services are critical for reducing

barriers that prevent low-income individuals from persisting in career pathways. One of the reasons career pathways should integrate services from multiple programs is to more effectively and efficiently provide support services. Two programs that can be particularly useful for this purpose are TANF and SNAP E&T.

State plans for both Arkansas and Ohio describe ways to use TANF to align support services and skill-building opportunities. Arkansas' combined state plan highlights the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, which coordinates education and training with support services to help low-income, TANF-eligible adults earn postsecondary credentials and find jobs in key industries (p.39). The Career Pathways Initiative – a partnership between the Department of Higher Education and the Department of Workforce Services – is funded through the TANF program and available at 25 community colleges in the state.

Although TANF is not officially part of Ohio's combined plan, the state plan discusses the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) that integrates funding from WIOA Title I employment and training programs and Ohio Works First, the financial assistance portion of the state's TANF program.<sup>5</sup> CCMEP is focusing initially on individuals who are ages 16 through 24. CCMEP mandates a single, client-centered case management approach and includes a common application, assessment and individual opportunity plan that meets the requirements for both Title I and TANF (pp. 24-25). Ohio requires each county to develop a CCMEP plan that details how the two programs will coordinate case management and other services (p. 40). Support services include career counseling, health services, housing, transportation and child care, and post-employment follow-up services for a minimum of 12 months (p. 89).

Washington and Massachusetts provide examples of combined plans that respectively describe well established and emerging plans to use both SNAP E&T and TANF to support skill-building.

In [Washington](#), both programs support skill-building by providing access to postsecondary credentials through contracting and partnering with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Through Washington's WorkFirst program, TANF recipients and other low income individuals have access to a continuum of basic and vocational educational opportunities, including I-BEST. The opportunities are structured around career pathways with stackable certificates allowing students to earn college credits leading to industry recognized certifications and degrees. The Department of Social and Health Services supports participants through referral, tuition payment, coordinated case management, child care, and other support services (pp. 126-127). In Washington, SNAP E&T is known as Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) and is focused on skill-building. Some of the support services that remove barriers to education and training under BFET include: career navigation, transportation, books, tuition, clothing, dependent care, tutoring services, and training-related equipment (p.127).

The TANF and SNAP E&T sections of Massachusetts' combined state plan discuss the state's desire to promote skill-building for low-income people. The TANF portion of the plan states that there is a need to increase resources for public assistance recipients to participate in education and training connected to career pathways, and underscores the importance of providing support services like day care and transportation (p. 275). It states that Massachusetts "intends to consider ways to utilize the TANF block grant to expand education, training, employment, and workforce activities to build more robust pathways for parents and caretakers receiving assistance" (p. 276). The SNAP E&T portion of Massachusetts' combined plan describes the state's plans to "increase investments of additional SNAP E&T resources in long-term skill and credentialing acquisition" for SNAP participants (p. 282). Specifically, the state plans to explore how it can use 50/50 funds to develop partnerships with community colleges.

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has expressed concerns regarding CCMEP. DOL has questioned the authority of a state to establish additional eligibility and work participation requirements for WIOA participants, and whether CCMEP conflicts with the authority WIOA assigns to local Workforce Development Boards. As of this writing, Ohio is responding to DOL's concerns in an attempt to obtain DOL approval.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON MAKING CAREER PATHWAYS JOB-DRIVEN:** The state plan should explain how the state will link career pathways and sector partnerships.

---

Under WIOA, career pathways must align with industry skill needs. States can achieve this by using sector partnerships to help design and establish career pathways. State plans in Colorado, Rhode Island, and Minnesota all describe strategies to link career pathways and sector partnerships:

Colorado’s state plan envisions sector partnerships leading the creation of career pathway systems throughout high demand industries in every region of the state. In fact, establishing a regional industry-led sector partnership is the first step in the state plan’s step-by-step framework for building career pathway systems (pp. 33-38).

Rhode Island’s career pathway strategy is intended to coordinate the services and resources required to connect people to job opportunities identified by sector partnerships (p.12).

Minnesota’s state plan identifies sector partnerships as the primary vehicle for engaging businesses in the development and maintenance of career pathways. The state plan explains that by connecting career pathways to sector partnerships, the state can create routes for residents to access in-demand jobs that pay family sustaining wages (p. 36).

## V. CROSS-AGENCY DATA AND MEASUREMENT

WIOA provides the opportunity for states to use cross-agency data and measurement to better align workforce and education programs with employer skill needs. WIOA sets certain requirements for data and measurement across the four titles of WIOA; however, states have the opportunity to go beyond WIOA’s requirements by building and using new data tools and by extending cross-agency data and measurement to additional programs.

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON A COMPREHENSIVE DATA SYSTEM:** The state plan should describe a comprehensive cross-agency data and performance measurement system that covers all major workforce development programs, not just the four titles of WIOA.

---

Washington, Rhode Island, and Mississippi’s state plans each describe key elements of a comprehensive data system:

Washington’s plan describes major elements of the state’s comprehensive performance accountability system that has been in place for many years, including common metrics and methods for measuring the performance of eleven public workforce development programs. The plan declares that under WIOA the state will move beyond consistency among the individual programs to developing a system for measuring collective success in preparing the workforce (pp. 13-20).

Rhode Island plans to develop a comprehensive cross-program data and measurement system beginning with Real Jobs Rhode Island, the state’s sector partnership initiative. The system will be built out from that starting point to cover the state’s major workforce programs (pp. 16-20).

Mississippi’s plan includes many key elements of a comprehensive data system: including automated data linking across combined programs, the use of common measures, and the development of cross-program data tools including dashboards, pathway evaluators, and supply and demand reports (pp. 51, 71, 76, 81).

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON SUPPLY AND DEMAND REPORTS:** The state plan should describe the state’s process for producing supply and demand reports. In states that already have supply and demand reports, the plan should describe the reports’ findings on skill shortages and use that information to guide the plan’s strategies for closing skill gaps.

---

Supply and demand reports show how the supply of newly credentialed workers compares to the number of workers that employers demand. State policymakers can use supply and demand reports to invest in training programs that will prepare more skilled workers for occupations that have a skill gap. National Skills Coalition’s State Workforce and Education Alignment Project (SWEAP) is demonstrating how state policymakers can use supply and demand reports and other data tools to develop policies that better align workforce and education programs with each other and with employers’ skill needs (see, [How Many More Skilled Workers Do We Need?](#)).

Plans for three SWEAP states – California (p.138-139), Ohio (p.43), and Mississippi (p.51) explain that they are in the process of developing supply and demand reports. Additionally, Indiana’s state plan indicates the Indiana Network of Knowledge (INK) will be developing supply and demand reports (p. 25). Minnesota will develop a web-based tool to measure and share supply and demand information (p. 54-44).

Washington has long used supply and demand reports to identify the gaps between the supply of newly trained workers and the number of job openings in the labor market. Washington new [state plan](#) continues to do so. (p. 5, 8)

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON DASHBOARDS:** The state plan should describe how the state will use the WIOA common metrics to measure the results of programs in addition to the core programs in WIOA. The state plan should describe the state’s dashboard or the steps the state will take to create a dashboard that displays program and system results as measured by the WIOA common measures.

---

Common metrics across programs help states plan across their workforce system, coordinate programs, and understand shared accountability for results. WIOA establishes a new set of common metrics that apply to each of its four titles and to training programs funded by WIOA.

Some state plans describe how the state’s intention to apply WIOA’s common metrics to additional workforce programs. [Mississippi](#) will use the WIOA common measures to report the performance of all combined plan programs, including TANF (p. 77-78) and [Maryland](#) will pilot the use of the WIOA common measures for employment and earnings to measure TANF results (pp. 77-78). Washington State has used common metrics to measure and report the performance of all major workforce development programs for twenty years. The [state plan](#) indicates Washington will review its common measures, which are very similar to the credential completion, employment and earnings measures in WIOA in order to make necessary adjustments (pp. 16-20).

In addition to applying WIOA common metrics to a broad array of workforce programs, some states plan to develop additional, state-specific metrics. For example, [Rhode Island](#) will develop additional state common measures to supplement the WIOA common measures. This common measurement system will cover TANF and Trade Adjustment Assistance and the other programs in the combined plan in addition to WIOA’s six core programs (pp. 18-20).

Once states have common metrics in place, they can develop data dashboards. Dashboards use a small number of common metrics to report education and employment outcomes across workforce development programs. Dashboards are another data tool being developed through NSC’s SWEAP initiative (see, [Are People Getting Credentials That Lead to Jobs?](#))

State plans for California, Ohio, and Minnesota each include dashboards:

California's Workforce Development Board intends to align performance measures across federal programs such as WIOA and state-funded workforce and education programs such as career and technical education at the state's community colleges (p. 13). The Board will report the performance results in a statutory-required dashboard, which it is working to develop through participation in NSC's SWEAP initiative (p. 138).

Ohio uses common metrics (called Workforce Success Measures) to measure the performance of Title I, Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Perkins CTE, and state higher education scholarship programs. The results are reported in the state's Workforce Success Dashboard. The metrics are very similar to the WIOA common measures for credential completion, employment, and earnings, and also include a measure of employer retention. The state will apply the common measures to additional programs, including TANF (pp. 23-24, 53).

Minnesota's state plan describes its "workforce program report card" which reports outcomes on program completion, credential attainment, employment, and earnings for certain state-funded programs. The plan explains that the report card will be expanded to include federally-funded workforce programs (p.63-64).

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON MEASURING CREDENTIALS:** The State Plan should discuss the steps the state will take to provide a full count of postsecondary credentials that have value in the labor market.

---

Attaining a postsecondary credential that is valued in the labor market is generally necessary for individuals to obtain higher levels of employment and earnings. Increased credential attainment is also necessary in order to close the skill gap faced by employers. WIOA establishes a new primary indicator of credential attainment that states and local areas must measure.

Some state plans mention their state's process for identifying credentials of value. For example, Pennsylvania has developed an Industry Certification Resource Guide utilizing both state and regional lists of high demand/skill/wage occupations and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's approved list of industry-recognized certifications for CTE programs. Statewide committees including industry representatives developed the CTE list using national and state data bases of skill standards, certifications, and licenses (p. 165). Maryland's plan says the state will use industry partnerships to identify industry-recognized credentials. (p. 114)

In other states, the education system is also very much involved in identifying credentials valued by employers, and not just academic degrees. For example, the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Department of Higher Education collaborate to maintain a list of technical certificates valued by employers (pp. 45-46).

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON UNIFIED AND COMPREHENSIVE DATA LINKING:** The state plan should identify a comprehensive system for linking data across workforce and education agencies for the purpose of measuring outcomes. The state plan should describe the state's participation in the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) II or action steps the state will take to participate in WRIS 2.

---

States have typically maintained separate administrative records of individuals' participation in workforce and education programs. States also maintain wage records of individuals' employment and earnings from jobs covered by unemployment insurance. By linking administrative records across

programs and by linking participant records with wage records states can track the progress of individuals through their workforce and education systems and out into the labor market. Such linked data systems are known as P-20W state longitudinal data systems.

Some states have long-established systems for linking P-20W data and using the linked data to measure and report performance outcomes. Others are in the process of creating or building out linked data systems. Here are some examples from the state plans:

[Mississippi](#) will initially use its State Longitudinal Data system known as LifeTracks to link data across programs and report performance results (p. 76). Ultimately, Mississippi will integrate combined programs' data systems into the Mississippi Works Common Intake and Reporting Module. This new automated data system will provide real-time information. (p. 71, 81).

[Pennsylvania](#) will build on its Workforce Data Quality Initiative to add programs to its system for data linking across agencies, with particular focus on the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and including data from the Departments of Corrections and Revenue (p. 18).

Indiana's new Indiana Network of Knowledge (INK) will bring together data from across many state agencies in a single data repository. INK will link program records with wage record and other data bases in order to measure performance (pp. 25, 32).

---

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION ON SCORECARDS FOR STUDENTS AND WORKERS:** The state plan should describe the state's process, or the steps the state will take, to provide scorecards for consumers that show training program performance as measured by the WIOA common metrics for credential attainment, employment, and earnings.

---

Scorecards report information on program performance that is useful for potential participants to know before they decide on which program to enroll in. Scorecards answer basic questions such as: How many participants complete? How many get jobs? What do the jobs pay? WIOA requires providers wanting their programs to be eligible to provide training funded by WIOA Title I to report this information on all students for eligible programs.

State plans for Washington and Colorado each describe their scorecards. The [Washington State Plan](#) notes that the State Board maintains a web-based consumer scorecard system at [CareerBridge.wa.gov](http://CareerBridge.wa.gov). CareerBridge provides information on over 4,000 public and private training programs. Information includes programs completion rates, and the employment rates and earnings of completers. The information is updated annually (p. 145). In order to efficiently provide consistent information on program results, the State Board collects student records from the program providers, and then matches the records with wage records and other administrative records in order to calculate performance. Performance is based on all students, not just those funded by WIOA Title I.

Colorado's plan describes how the state will have a Title I Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) system that is based on data matching with wage records. In order to achieve this and make it easier to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Department of Higher Education (DHE) will maintain the ETPL system. DHE will collect seed records from training providers, link the student records with wage records, and will report consistently measured performance across providers (pp. 94-95).

## VI. JOB-DRIVEN INVESTMENTS

**PLAYBOOK RECOMMENDATION:** The state plan should describe how the state will invest in training directly connected to jobs.

WIOA emphasizes training that is directly connected to jobs, including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other types of work-based learning. Many state plans emphasize the expansion of job-driven training, particularly apprenticeship and work-based learning for youth, and some states have announced that they will use the governor's reserve funds for this purpose.

[Pennsylvania](#) will use a portion of governor's set-aside funds to support the creation of an Office of Apprenticeship (OAT) with the goal of promoting and growing Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs across the state (p.74). The OAT will provide technical assistance to employers and facilitate regional partnerships around the expansion of registered apprenticeship programs, especially non-traditional programs in industries such as health care and agriculture, and occupations, such as food processing and information technology jobs, and in the recruitment and training of women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and other individuals with barriers to employment (p. 80).

In [Maryland](#), the Governor will also use some of the state set-a-side funds to help grow apprenticeships (p. 107). The state is working to expand apprenticeship opportunities, including in such non-traditional fields as cyber security (p. 17). In order to promote and facilitate apprenticeship programs, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program utilizes Apprentice Navigators. The Navigators participate in career and job fairs, and other public events to conduct public outreach efforts. They meet with jobseekers, sponsors, and employers, to help them understand apprenticeships and develop new programs (p. 116).

Ohio stresses linking apprenticeships and higher education, in part to ensure apprentices are concurrently awarded college and apprenticeship credit for the related instruction portion of their training. Ohio statutes require apprenticeship sponsors to have curriculum designed or provided in conjunction with a public postsecondary institution. This provides a framework for articulated credit and dual enrollment, including statewide articulation agreements (p. 39).

[Rhode Island's plan](#) declares the state's commitment to the goal of doubling the number of apprentices, and indicates the state will align the expansion of apprenticeship with the state's sector partnership strategy (p. 53). [California](#) has also established the goal of doubling the number of apprentices (p. 12). The state plan also emphasizes other forms of "earn and learn," including pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, transitional and subsidized employment, paid internships and externships, and project-based compensated learning (p. 77-78).

## VII. STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH

The Playbook did not call-out youth for special recommendations. Youth, however, can be well-served by the key strategies emphasized in the Playbook. This review of state plans concludes by noting some of the ways that state plans have connected youth to successful workforce development strategies, particularly sector partnerships and work-based learning.

One of the five broad goals in [Pennsylvania's plan](#) is to: "Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, internships and other similar experiences." (p.8) The plan encourages local boards to collaborate with

Industry Partnerships and other multi-employer workforce partnerships to provide school-to-work activities for youth. WIOA governor's reserve funds and state funds will be used to support these collaborative efforts. (pp. 13-14) Working with industry partnerships, local boards will provide opportunities for soft skills development, internships, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring. Pennsylvania will also support summer youth employment and internship opportunities, including through the use of TANF and state funds (pp. 86-87).

Rhode Island will also use sector partnerships to provide services to youth. The sector partnerships will braid funding from a variety of sources in order to provide a range of services, including work-based learning to youth (p. 9). Youth providers will help youth find jobs with employers that: "provide career exploration, skill development and positive adult role models; relate to the youth's interests, abilities, and career goals; include an overview of the company and specific job duties and responsibilities; and include rotation through different department within an organization during placement" (p. 57).

Maryland recently established a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. The Committee is evaluating the effectiveness of high school youth apprenticeship programs in other states and other countries and identifying ways to implement high school youth apprenticeship programs in Maryland. The Committee will consider tax credits, grants, and other subsidies to support high school youth apprenticeship programs, and set targets for the number of apprenticeship opportunities for youth that the State should reach over the next three years (p. 58).

The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services is partnering with the Ohio Department of Education to establish seamless pathways from secondary CTE programs directly into Registered Apprenticeship programs using a pre-apprenticeship model (p. 46).

Washington is using WIOA governor's reserve funds and Perkins CTE funds to support YouthWorks programs that provide eligible youth with career pathway guidance, work-based learning experiences, business mentorships, and internships (p.174, 182).

## CONCLUSION

WIOA state plans provide a chance for states to describe how they will develop a workforce system that uses sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments to prepare a skilled workforce that meets employer needs. As we have seen, many states have taken advantage of the opportunity to use their state plan to describe how they will implement these key strategies. *Implementing the Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans* offers just a sample of the many ways states plan to move forward. States can build on these examples as they continue to realize innovation and opportunity in WIOA.

## ABOUT NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

National Skills Coalition is a non-partisan, broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper. We engage in organizing, advocacy, and communications to advance state and federal policies that support these goals — policies that are based on the on-the-ground expertise of our members.

National Skills Coalition was founded in 1998 as The Workforce Alliance in response to a series of federal policies that signaled the end of national investments in the skills of America's workers at a time when skill gaps were growing in key U.S. industries. Since then, we've demonstrated that investments in skills work. We've shown that diverse stakeholders can find agreement around specific reforms that will improve a variety of workforce education and training policies. And we have documented that the American public is strongly supportive of a deeper investment in the skills of America's workers. We continue to mobilize support for a new national skills agenda that cuts across public policies, and simultaneously serves a wide range of U.S. workers and industries.

National Skills Coalition is governed by a Board of Directors and advised by a national Leadership Council drawn from the ranks of business, labor, community colleges, community-based organizations, and the public workforce system.

More than 8,000 members, representing more than 3,000 organizations in all 50 states, comprise the broad-based membership of National Skills Coalition.

Learn more at [www.nationalskillscoalition.org](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org).



**NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**  
Every worker. Every industry. **A strong economy.**

NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

1730 Rhode Island Avenue NW

Suite 712

Washington DC 20036

Phone: 202.223.8991

Fax: 202.223.8354

[info@nationalskillscoalition.org](mailto:info@nationalskillscoalition.org)

[www.nationalskillscoalition.org](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org)