

DATA FOR AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

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ABOUT

THIS POLICY BRIEF:

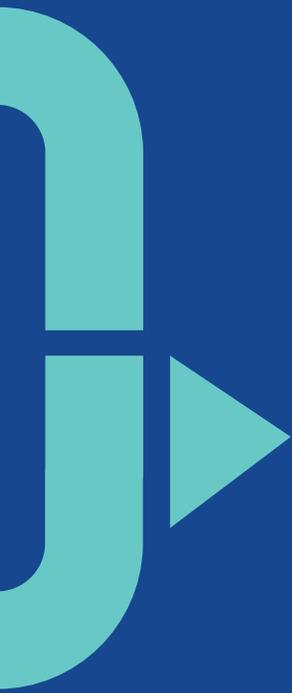
Public data and accountability are key to an inclusive economic recovery. We need data on how different workers and businesses are faring in the recovery, so we can hold policymakers accountable to equitable outcomes for those most impacted. Disparities and inequities in skills training programs can only be eliminated if there is high-quality information on program outcomes available to practitioners and policymakers to assess and address equity gaps.

This policy brief provides recommendations on how to measure and report on what matters to help diminish structural inequities and to shape implementation of federal recovery investments as well as new state and federal workforce investments for years to come.

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INTRODUCTION:

OUR GOAL: AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

An inclusive economic recovery is an expansion of the U.S. economy in which the workers and businesses who were most impacted by the pandemic, as well as workers who have been held back by structural barriers of discrimination or lack of opportunity, are empowered to equitably participate in and benefit from the economy's expansion and restructuring. We believe a set of expansive, industry- and worker-targeted skills policies at both the federal and state levels, accompanied by the necessary income and social service supports to keep workers and businesses whole during this transition, must be part of the strategy in pursuit of that goal.

From National Skills Coalition's *Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery*.¹

Whether it's an expected technological change, an unexpected natural disaster, or a global pandemic, economic shocks threaten the lives and well-being of workers, families, and communities.

These shocks can also amplify the vital role that working people play in our nation and economy. Working people treat patients in hospitals and dispense prescriptions in pharmacies; they manufacture and deliver essential goods; and they keep the internet and other critical utilities operational.

While millions of working people have kept our country running during the pandemic, others lost their jobs as businesses in high-contact industries like hospitality and retail shut down and didn't reopen. In the midst of the pandemic, the unemployment rate reached a record high of 14.7 percent,² and Americans suffering permanent job loss peaked at 3.7 million.³ As of April 2022, roughly one in four unemployed workers has been jobless for six months or more, and 5.9 million people want a job but are not actively looking for work and, thus, are not counted in national labor force estimates.⁴

The impacts of an economic shock are rarely even. During the pandemic, workers without a college degree were hit particularly hard. The unemployment rate for people with only a high school diploma reached 17.3% – more than double the rate for those with at least a bachelor's degree.⁵ Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrant, and other workers of color (already less likely to have a bachelor's degree) were also overrepresented both in frontline, essential jobs and in industries that were highly affected by the economic shutdown and business closures. Black and Latinx business owners permanently closed their doors at disproportionate rates.⁶ The majority of pandemic-related job losses have been experienced by women.

These alarming and disproportionate impacts have exacerbated longstanding race, gender, and class inequities in our labor market and

illuminated the enduring injustices and structural barriers that have limited people – particularly people of color – from accessing education, training, and economic opportunities.

A truly inclusive economic recovery means that the workers and businesses who were most impacted by this pandemic, as well as workers who have been held back by structural barriers of discrimination or lack of opportunity, are empowered to equitably participate in and benefit from the economy's expansion and restructuring.

Our nation's recovery from the deepest and most abrupt economic recession on record represents an opportunity to directly confront the generations of policies that haven't worked.⁷

The economic crisis resulting from COVID-19 has created an imperative to publicly invest in equitable skills training as part of a broader strategy to create an inclusive economic recovery. While not the only solution, high-quality, inclusive skills training has an essential role to play in supporting the workers and small businesses that have been most impacted by the pandemic. NSC continues to advocate for increased system capacity and expanded access to high quality, industry driven education and training that prepares workers for good jobs.

Investments with an eye toward equity – particularly racial equity – are important not only because of the moral and economic imperative to dismantle structural racism



**WHILE WE ARE RICH IN
COLLECTING DATA, WE ARE
POOR IN HARNESSING IT TO
DRIVE THE CHANGE WE NEED.**



■

THE PANDEMIC MAGNIFIED THE NEED FOR TIMELY, ACCURATE AND COMPLETE DATA, AS WELL AS DATA SYSTEMS THAT ARE AGILE ENOUGH TO GET ACTIONABLE INFORMATION INTO THE HANDS OF STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

within the workforce education and training system, but to ensure these initiatives intentionally address: the disproportionate impact of the economic crisis on women, workers of color, immigrants, and workers with a high school diploma or less.

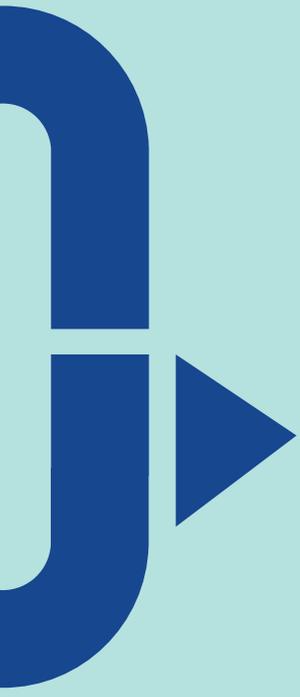
To ensure our skills policies deliver on creating the equitable and inclusive conditions and outcomes desired, we will need data. While we are rich in collecting data, we are poor in harnessing it to drive the change we need. Over 70 million individuals annually engage in our education, workforce, and social

services systems. And over \$1.4 trillion is spent on postsecondary education, on federal and state funding for education and workforce development systems and programs, and by the military on educational activities.⁸

Without common measures across skills training investments, we cannot begin to evaluate the success – or failure – of our economic recovery efforts on those who have been disproportionately impacted by economic shocks. Nor can we begin to leverage the strategies, administrative changes, and new policies that will center racial equity and ensure that workers who were previously held back by structural barriers of discrimination and lack of opportunity can participate in this economic recovery.

The pandemic magnified the need for timely, accurate and complete data, as well as data systems that are agile enough to get actionable information into the hands of policymakers. An inclusive economic recovery is one that identifies and uplifts those most impacted and centers proven strategies to support workers' pathways to skilled careers so that we can create a better post-pandemic future of work. To get there, we need data on who benefits from economic recovery policies and transparency on the outcomes of skills policies that allow us to gauge the well-being of workers and businesses.

Creating and implementing effective data and accountability policies require a clear vision and strong leadership. This vision must recognize the value of measuring what matters, funding the data system infrastructure that is needed, and creating a data-informed culture of shared accountability. Workforce practitioners, educators, and state and federal leaders must work together to invest in what works so that workers, businesses, and our communities equitably participate in and benefit from the economy's expansion and restructuring.



MOVE TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY:

BETTER DATA LEADS TO BETTER SKILLS POLICIES

PUBLIC DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY REGARDING WHO IS BEING INCLUDED IN THIS RECOVERY.

Report data on how different workers and businesses are faring in the recovery and hold policies accountable to equitable outcomes for those most impacted.

From National Skills Coalition's *Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery*.⁹

The culmination of a worldwide pandemic, an economic recession, and an imperative to address racial inequities in skills policies is a call to action to move from good intentions to holding policymakers accountable for making sound skills investments that advance racial equity. Accountability must be a shared responsibility of the workforce system – from authorizing adequate funding levels and providing clear guidance at the federal level that allows states and local areas to serve displaced workers and the businesses who ultimately benefit from a workforce trained by public dollars.

Public data and accountability are critical in evaluating if workforce and skills training policies support an inclusive economic recovery. Our vision for better data and stronger workforce data policies requires that:

- **Federal agencies and states have a robust and forward-thinking approach to data** so policymakers proactively use data to change and advance new policies that support an inclusive economic recovery. State data leaders must also have the tools to access and make data publicly available. And local practitioners need more resources and increased capacity to use data in continuous improvement efforts.

- **Federal agencies and states expand use of disaggregated data** to identify equity gaps in access to high-quality skills training and attainment of quality non-degree credentials that have value to workers and businesses.
- **Federal policies make significant and ongoing investments in data systems and capacity, collaborate on shared and comparable outcome metrics, and prioritize public transparency** through existing legislation such as WIOA reauthorization or implementation of federal recovery legislation.
- **Skills advocates understand how data policies provide value and transparency** for evaluating skills training and workforce programs and supporting evidence-based policy and decision-making that benefits workers and businesses.

Many federal and state leaders are committed to this vision and ensuring workforce data infrastructure and policies reflect what's needed to help local communities and institutions address equity gaps in workforce education and training access and outcomes. NSC's recommendations on public data transparency, data disaggregation, expansion of outcome measures, and reporting on what matters are intended to serve as a playbook for federal and state leaders to continue to advance this shared vision.

WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING?

Skills training policies should be based on evidence of what works to create greater access to and better outcomes from our workforce investments. Evidence can include outcomes measures, the collection and use of data, and assessments and evaluations that measure the impact of a program on the population the program intends to serve.

Evidence is central to how policymakers should start each decision-making process – use data and learn from program evaluation, adopt policies, and direct funding so that it achieves the best results. The federal Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, or Evidence Act¹⁰, provides a roadmap. The Evidence Act expands the ability of the federal government to use evidence and data to make federal policies and programs more effective and efficient.¹¹

The Evidence Act, which was signed into law in 2019, requires federal agencies to:

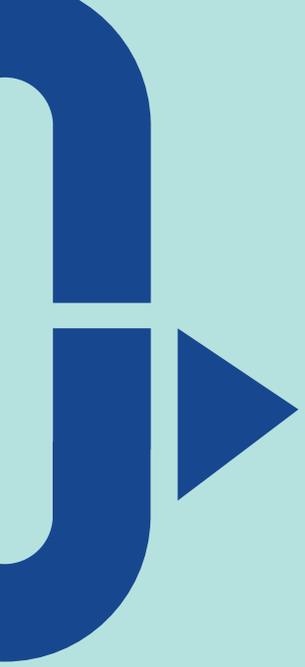
- **Develop a plan for evidence-based policymaking.** Federal agencies' plans should include policy questions, descriptions of data collection, and analytical methods. Each agency is also required to appoint a Chief Evaluation Officer who will assess the agency's evaluation capacities, develop the agency's evaluation plan, and implement it.
- **Improve researchers' access to government data.** Federal agencies must have an open data plan, or data that is valuable and will be available to the public, an inventory of data assets, and a transparent and secure process for accessing data.

- **Protect confidential information** by restricting the disclosure of individual information without the consent of the individual.

It's essential to evaluate federal and state policies and programs on their impact on the populations they were designed to serve, especially programs that target people who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Given the pandemic's disproportionate impacts on those groups, a move toward data-informed policies will ensure that those most impacted benefit from economic recovery investments.

In 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration boosted the evidence-driven efforts of federal agencies through executive actions, Evidence Act guidance¹², and American Rescue Plan Act guidance¹³ to help state and local governments maximize the impact of their recovery funds. Taken together, the Evidence Act and related administrative guidance provides federal, state, and local agencies with a roadmap to use evidence and data to inform the public investments needed to drive an equitable recovery.

IT'S ESSENTIAL TO EVALUATE FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ON THEIR IMPACT ON THE POPULATIONS THEY WERE DESIGNED TO SERVE, ESPECIALLY PROGRAMS THAT TARGET PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED, MARGINALIZED, AND ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY PERSISTENT POVERTY AND INEQUALITY.



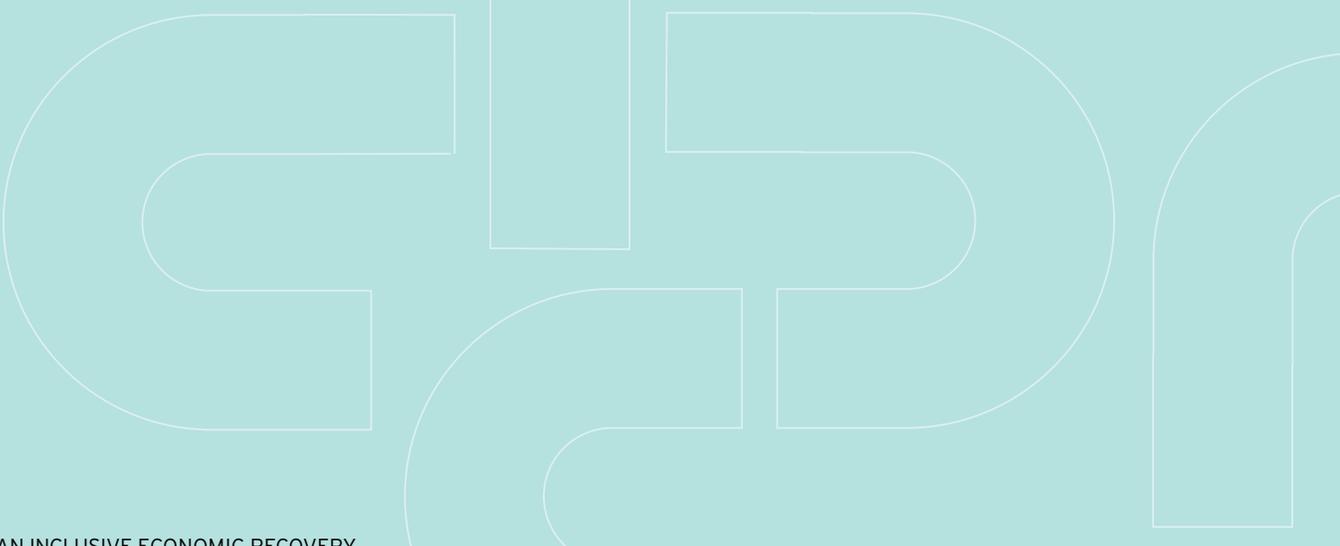
MONITOR OUTCOMES:

DISAGGREGATE DATA TO CLOSE EQUITY GAPS

ELIMINATE STRUCTURAL RACISM IN SKILLS POLICIES

Those most impacted by the pandemic have been lower-income people of color and immigrants. Structural racism has shaped labor market policies, including skills policies, that contributed to those inequities before and during the pandemic. Skills and re-employment policies should purposefully improve both opportunities and outcomes for workers of color coming out of this pandemic.

From National Skills Coalition's [Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery](#).¹⁴



Data are critical to evaluate what's working and what's not in terms of creating greater access to workforce programs and in reporting the measurable economic gains associated with career advancement, income and wealth creation, and the well-being of workers and businesses.

Shared data systems, too, are crucial to inform policy and decision making at the state and local levels. Data disaggregation in education and workforce training programs is important to measure inclusive economic recovery efforts and to ensure that policies do not limit working adults and learners from achieving successful outcomes in education and work.

For example, if states only look at workforce program outcomes that clump all workers together (e.g., a 60 percent employment rate overall), they will miss important clues about specific programs or services that, for instance, have better outcomes for Black workers or more concerning outcomes for women. Data disaggregation allows leaders to more carefully discern “springboards” where a program or system is doing an especially good job of serving a targeted population group, and “bottlenecks” where a program or system is doing an especially poor job.



In particular, data disaggregation matters for equity. Disparities and inequities in skills training programs can only be eliminated if high-quality information on program participation and outcomes is available to practitioners and policymakers to assess and address equity gaps. Data disaggregation also is important for disrupting occupational segregation, or the separation of workers into different industries or seniority levels based on demographics, which occurs across numerous intersections, including race and gender. Both the data that are collected and well-designed systems must enable tracking program access and outcomes-focused measures to maintain progress towards identifying and closing equity gaps.

An inclusive economic recovery requires that data disaggregation be embedded in education and skills policies aimed at helping adult workers and learners. Congress should provide resources to states and other recipients of recovery investments so that accurate and adequate data can be captured and reported and should ensure that federal agencies with oversight for recovery funds provide meaningful guidance and support to identify and address equity gaps.

FINDING

71% **OF VOTERS**

support collecting and publicly reporting data on which groups of people are and are not benefiting from stimulus and recovery efforts, including investments in skills training.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

REQUIRE THAT ALL EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS INCLUDE COLLECTION OF SELF-REPORTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKERS AND LEARNERS SO OUTCOMES CAN BE DISAGGREGATED BY RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, INCOME, AND GEOGRAPHY.

Because this pandemic disproportionately impacted workers of color¹⁵, women¹⁶, immigrant workers¹⁷, workers earning low wages¹⁸, and adults without a college degree¹⁹ we must be able to disaggregate participation and economic outcomes associated with investments in retraining, upskilling, job creation, and retention through the following dimensions:

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- English language proficiency
- Income
- Geography

The demographic characteristics outlined here serve as a starting point to measure the outcomes of skills training policies on individuals and working adults. State and federal programs may also be designed to support the needs of other specific populations, including veterans, people with disabilities, returning citizens (e.g., justice-involved

individuals), housing insecure individuals, and parents. Disaggregating outcomes for these populations is also critical, so policymakers should prioritize additional characteristics that reflect institution, agency, and workforce training or postsecondary education attainment goals.

Whenever possible, education and workforce outcomes need to be available by population subgroups, and the intersection of these subgroups (e.g., race and ethnicity by gender), so data can be used to actively address disparate outcomes if and when they become apparent. Without data disaggregation, practitioners and policymakers won't be able to identify systemic barriers that prevent education and employment success or identify the policies that drive equitable outcomes.

Currently, there is wide variation in the amount and type of information that is collected by education and skills training programs, and even greater variation in what data is publicly released for analysis. Without more robust and standardized processes for collecting and reporting data, advocates will be hampered in closing racial and other equity gaps.

Expanding data collection will require data systems capable of capturing the detailed characteristics necessary to know who is being served and to what benefit. Necessary support must

be provided to states, education and training providers, and community-based organizations, where service delivery occurs, to build capacity to collect these data and be able to analyze and report on it in meaningful ways.

There are several instances where the federal government has expanded data disaggregation to provide insight into who is being served by stimulus funding and how the pandemic continues to affect people's lives. These offer a blueprint for what needs to happen with data disaggregation for workforce education and skills training investments. For example:

- Since April 2020, the Census Bureau in partnership with fifteen federal agencies, has regularly conducted the Household Pulse Survey.²⁰ National and state level data are disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, education level, household income, and disability.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics is now publishing monthly labor force data²¹ for American Indian and Alaska Natives. Monthly estimates give us more timely measures to see how groups are faring in the labor market. Previously, key labor force characteristics – like, unemployment rates and labor force participation rates – were only available annually for American Indian and Alaska Natives.

- The Department of Education shared disaggregated data on the use of Higher Education Emergency Relief funds to support students with disabilities, English Learners, students experiencing homelessness, and others during the pandemic through its Education Stabilization Fund Transparency Portal.²² It has also made changes to the College Scorecard²³ so that users can now see median earnings outcomes disaggregated by gender, income, and dependency.

The Executive Order (EO 13985²⁴) issued by the Biden-Harris Administration, to examine barriers to racial equity and initiate several efforts to address equity for people of color and communities that have been historically underserved, also included the establishment of the Equitable Data Working Group.²⁵ This interagency effort – to examine the existing federal data infrastructure and provide recommendations for improving it – is focused on disaggregating data by race, gender, and other demographic variables so policymakers can better understand policy implications of federal investments. This is an important step to improving federal data infrastructure and ensuring that states and local communities have the data they need to track progress and develop targeted solutions for more equitable outcomes.



2.

ENSURE PARTICIPANTS OF SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS KNOW WHAT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ARE BEING COLLECTED ABOUT THEM, WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION, AND HOW THEIR DATA WILL BE USED.

Good data collection and reporting practices must ensure that individuals being served know what personally identifiable information (PII) is being collected about them and how their data will be used to measure their longer-term education and employment outcomes. State and local efforts to bring together education and workforce data help to identify the most viable pathways for individuals and inform education and workforce policy and practice. Through these efforts, the frequency of linking data on an individual across education, workforce, health, human services, and other civic outcomes has expanded greatly in the last decade.²⁶ Longitudinal data systems now routinely track individual and student outcomes across state systems and even across state lines.

While there are many useful applications of longitudinal data systems, it is important to recognize the past harm that

educational tracking has had on people of color. Educational tracking, or the practice of separating students into different groups, classrooms, or learning pathways by perceived ability level or learning goals, was historically used to steer students of color into vocational educational programs that did not connect them to jobs in high-demand fields or provide them with an on ramp to a college credential. This type of tracking has contributed to occupational segregation and racial income disparities.

Data collection, analysis, sharing and reporting practices must originate from the orientation of “do no harm” to the individuals, particularly when sharing outcomes data does not always communicate the context (e.g., lived experience) of the individuals or could perpetuate further tracking. Any advances in data collection and outcomes reporting on education and skills training programs, especially those aimed at reducing equity gaps must include strong data ethic principles, data privacy protections, and principles of use. This includes, but isn’t limited to, protecting personally identifiable information when releasing summary data for public reporting purposes.

WHY DATA DISAGGREGATION MATTERS TO EQUITY



From an equity standpoint, disaggregating data is the necessary step to identify the gaps caused by structural racism and other longstanding race, gender, and class inequities that have shaped labor market policies and contributed to inequitable outcomes for workers, especially workers of color, women, immigrants, and people without a college degree. To ensure equitable outcomes, data disaggregation must include:

RACE AND ETHNICITY - Racial and ethnic inequities in educational attainment, employment, and wages are the result of intentional historical and current policies and practices that have systemically limited educational and economic opportunities for Black, Latinx, and Native Americans as well as immigrants. We know that increasing the racial diversity of the workforce is linked to better outcomes for both individual businesses and the economy overall. And racial workforce diversity is one of the most important predictors of sales revenue, customer numbers, and profitability.²⁷ Expanding skills training access for people of color and supporting their advancement along career pathways are necessary steps to achieving these positive outcomes.

GENDER - Gender disparities in employment and earnings continue to persist with women of color and foreign-born women being



overrepresented in low wage, high growth jobs compared to white women. During the pandemic, women were also disproportionately represented in sectors and occupations which were impacted by greater layoffs, a phenomenon not seen in previous economic turndowns in the United States.²⁸ In addition to minimizing occupational segregation, successful skills training programs should provide other supports, like dependent care, to assist working women in their career advancement.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY -

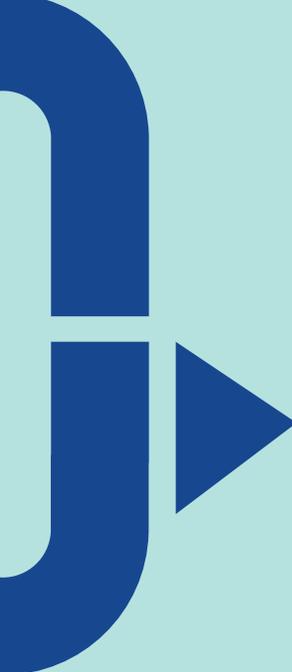
Disparities in English language proficiency contribute to inequities in educational attainment, employment, and earnings. English learners represent one in nine workers in the United States. English learners are also disproportionately people of color. English skills are vital for obtaining (and advancing in) many types of employment, particularly in fast-growing personal and business services occupations where workers have extensive interpersonal interactions with customers and co-workers.

INCOME - Black and Latinx workers are disproportionately represented in jobs that pay lower earnings that translate to the accumulation of less personal and household

wealth over time.²⁹ While racial wealth disparities include both historical and contemporary factors and extend beyond difference in educational attainment, Black and Latinx students spend a larger share of their income on college expenses. Huge racial wealth gaps mean that non-white families are less able to financially invest in their children's postsecondary education, leaving college out of reach for many without taking out student loans.

GEOGRAPHY - The pervasiveness of geographical segregation policies³⁰ continues to impact the education options and job opportunities that people can readily access. In some cases, there are actual physical barriers between communities of color and where job centers are. Smarter workforce development policies can address some of these barriers (e.g., by locating training programs within target communities); however, inclusive economic development is needed to ensure that people of color not only have access to quality job opportunities across their region, but also access to family-supporting job opportunities within their own communities.

For more information on how workforce training and education policies can advance racial equity, please see NSC's "The Roadmap for Racial Equity" report.³¹



MEASURE WHAT MATTERS:

ESTABLISH ENHANCED OUTCOME METRICS ACROSS SKILLS INVESTMENTS

MEASURE THE IMPACTS OF OUR INTERVENTIONS AND HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE

An inclusive economic recovery is not just one in which the national unemployment rate goes down or the overall GDP goes up. Across all our skills and re-employment policies, we need to commit to digging into which workers, businesses, and industries have been effectively helped by those policies, and which, if any, may have (again) been left behind. When we find the latter, we need to commit to adjust those policies to address inequities.

*From National Skills Coalition's *Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery*.³²*



WE NEED DATA TO MEASURE IF THE OUTCOMES OF SKILLS POLICIES EFFECTIVELY HELP WORKING ADULTS GAIN ACCESS TO BETTER CAREERS AND FAMILY-SUSTAINING WAGES.

In light of the pandemic's disproportionate impact on workers of color, workers without a college degree, and workers in jobs that pay low wages, we need data to measure if the outcomes of skills policies effectively help working adults gain access to better careers and family-sustaining wages.

National Skills Coalition has posited that for skills policies to help achieve the goal of an inclusive economic recovery, they must:

- Invest in those people and businesses who have been hurt the most
- Ensure that working adults have access to better jobs than before the pandemic
- Provide long-term, career-focused solutions that lead working adults to sustainable careers versus just a job

Congress adopted common performance indicators in the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that were designed by the states to measure employment and related outcomes in a way that makes sense for a wide variety of programs that prepare people for employment. The WIOA common measures have been applied beyond the six core programs of WIOA to many other Department of Labor (DOL) programs, Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training. However, there is still not comprehensive alignment of performance measures across all federal skills training programs administered by education, workforce, and human services agencies.

Job placement and short-term wage measurements are the most commonly reported outcomes of skills training programs. Yet they provide only a starting place to assess what matters to workers, businesses, and communities. We need to establish common metrics across all federal skills training programs and new outcomes measures that support tracking and reporting progress towards the guiding policy principles of an inclusive economic recovery.

NSC recommends these three additional measures:

- 1. Training related job placement** - measure the investment in those who have been hurt the most by the pandemic and ensure those investments lead to quality job placements
- 2. Quality non-degree credential attainment** - measure the investment in credentials of value, participation/enrollment in high quality non-degree programs, and attainment of these credentials that lead people to better jobs than before the pandemic
- 3. Long-term employment, education, and wage outcomes** - measure the investment in long-term, career-focused solutions and the outcomes associated with a sustainable career, further education, and labor market advancement

Expanding outcomes measures help us evaluate progress towards an inclusive economic recovery, however, it's just one needed step. Without common definitions and metrics across skills training programs, the public data available vary widely. Nationally, we do not yet have comprehensive information available for all students on employment outcomes and earnings of postsecondary and workforce programs across the county. The proposed federal College Transparency Act, for example, would close significant gaps in college data reporting.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

ESTABLISH COMMON OUTCOMES METRICS ACROSS FEDERAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS.

Aligning performance measures across federal skills investments would lead to more collaboration across systems, organizations, and funders. The passage of WIOA in 2014 provided an historic opportunity to align definitions, streamline performance indicators, and integrate reporting for core federal employment and training programs.³³ WIOA established common performance measures across a variety of employment and training programs with a goal to lead to a better understanding of the overall impact of these federal investments, and to help ensure that federal skills investments are evidence-based, data-driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers.

WIOA's six common performance measures have become a benchmark for how workforce training programs are often evaluated. The common performance measures³⁴ include:

- Employment rate in the second quarter after exit
- Employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit
- Median earnings in the second quarter after exit
- Credential attainment
- Measurable skill gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers

Despite these advances in commonly defined measures under WIOA, there is still not comprehensive alignment of performance measures across all federal skills training programs administered by education, workforce, and human services agencies. Figure 1 (on the following page) documents a range of education and skills training programs and the common outcomes that states and local areas who administer these programs are required to report to federal agencies.

Alignment of skill training performance metrics continues to be “desired state” for practitioners. When comparable metrics are not collected across federal skills training programs, it creates barriers for coordination to effectively serve students and workers across funding streams. The alignment of outcomes measures, as well as integrated data systems, would help states and local areas see the impact of interconnected service delivery. Alignment would also dramatically advance racial equity in workforce training and education policies because it would aid in the identification of gaps in access and service delivery to inform the policy changes or funding needed to close those gaps. Lastly, easy-to-compare metrics would aid policymakers and skills advocates in holding states and local areas accountable for a similar set of outcomes.

FIGURE 1: COMMONLY AVAILABLE PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

	Enrollment / Completion	Credential attained¹	Employment²	Wages / Earnings²	Other Reported Measures
WIOA CORE PROGRAMS					
Title I: Adult & Dislocated Worker programs	Yes, included	Yes, included	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	Measurable skill gains
Title II: Adult Literacy Programs	Yes, included	Yes, included	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	Measurable skill gains
Title III: Wagner Peyser	Yes, included	Not applicable	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	Measurable skill gains
Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation	Yes, included	Yes, included	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	Measurable skill gains
OTHER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)					
Other DOL Employment and Training Programs³	Yes, included	Yes, included	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	Measurable skill gains
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Yes, included	Yes, included	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	Median earnings in 2 nd quarter	No
SOCIAL SERVICES					
SNAP Employment & Training (E&T)	Yes, included	No	Measured in 2 nd & 4 th quarters	No	No
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Higher Education Act Title IV institutions⁴	Yes, included	Yes, included	No	Median earnings in the 2 nd full year	Data on average annual costs, graduation rates, Pell grants, and federal student loans
Third-party, Proprietary, and Other Non-Title IV Eligible Training Providers	Varies by state	Varies by state	Varies by state	Varies by state	Varies by state
Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)	Yes, included	Count earning recognized postsecondary credentials by career cluster	Measured in 2 nd quarter after exit	No	Program quality indicator (e.g., credential attainment)

Source: NSC analysis

¹ Including type of credential, field of study, or occupation

² Measured after exit or completion

³ Includes Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native American Programs, National Farmworker Programs, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, H-1B Job Training Grants, Reentry Employment Opportunities. Does not include the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.

⁴ Including community colleges, public and private universities, and private institutions eligible for federally financial aid, and who report to IPEDS



**MEASURING
JOB QUALITY
INCLUDES MORE
THAN JUST
THE FINANCIAL
ASPECTS OF
SUSTAINABLE PAY
AND BENEFITS.**



2.

EXPAND OUTCOMES TO INCLUDE THOSE THAT ALLOW POLICYMAKERS TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS AND MEASURE ECONOMIC MOBILITY ALONG A CAREER PATHWAY.

To measure if skills training policies are leading to an inclusive economic recovery for workers and businesses, outcomes measures should be expanded to include measures of quality and economic mobility, including:

- **Training-related job placement** - Workers who were most impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic should have access to skills training programs aligned to in-demand occupations in growing industry sectors that show evidence of successfully placing participants in jobs aligned with the training. By developing a training-related placement measure and reporting outcomes publicly, we ensure skills training programs are aligned with the training needs of businesses and provide individuals with the best opportunities to train for the most viable jobs in their local area.
- **Quality non-degree credential attainment** - Non-degree credentials matter to workers and jobseekers because they have value in the labor market. However, some are higher quality than others, meaning they lead to further education and employment. Some connect individuals to good careers, while others have little or no economic payoff. When skills training policies include quality assurance measures, it helps workers identify the right program and credential

to meet their education and employment goals. Quality assurance systems also make it easier for businesses to identify talent and address emerging skill needs by clarifying which applicants have the necessary skills to be effective.

Over the past few years, states have been working to define quality non-degree credentials³⁵ and advance policies³⁶ to support their equitable access and attainment. Recommended criteria to define quality non-degree credentials include whether there are substantial job opportunities associated with the credential, transparent evidence of the competencies mastered by credential holders, evidence of the employment and earnings outcomes of individuals after obtaining the credential, and whether there are policies to embed non-degree credentials in other education and training pathways.

- **Long-term employment, education, and wage outcomes** - Job creation and training programs should not focus exclusively on getting unemployed adults to their next job. To support workers facing structural economic challenges, the long-term success of skills training policies should be measured not by an individual's first job, but by how the career pathway of an individual is developed over several years. Short-term outcomes (e.g., employment and wages over a one-year time horizon) do not sufficiently capture how people progress from entry-level jobs, experience wage and skill advancement with an employer,

and continue their education to progress along a quality career pathway. States should review outcomes over a longer time horizon.

- **Other considerations in measuring and analyzing outcomes** - The year 2021 has been dubbed the “Great Resignation” as record numbers of workers have quit their jobs (roughly 33 million since the spring of 2021). The reasons that workers have voluntarily quit their jobs have focused on issues of quality, especially for frontline workers who kept our economy up and running during a global pandemic. Measuring job quality includes more than just the financial aspects of sustainable pay and benefits (e.g., access to health insurance, paid family and medical leave, child and elder care, and retirement benefits). It also includes flexible work schedules, workplace safety, opportunities for career development, and meaningful engagement between employers and employees that promote inclusion and belonging. NSC is working with several states on developing measures for quality non-degree credential attainment that include measures for the quality of jobs and career pathways associated with those credentials (e.g., wages, benefits, dependency on social services).

Including worker and student voices in the design and evaluation of skills training policies is essential for increasing equitable access to and outcomes for these programs. When individuals and communities directly engage in how skills training programs



INCLUDING WORKER AND STUDENT VOICES IN THE DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF SKILLS TRAINING POLICIES IS ESSENTIAL FOR INCREASING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND OUTCOMES FOR THESE PROGRAMS.

are designed and implemented it leads to increased success for workers, especially for workers of color. Centering the voices and expertise of working adults of color in policy development and changes to existing policies means that participants have programs and supports that better reflect their lived experiences.

Qualitative data are also necessary elements for interpreting data analysis associated with all of the outcome measures discussed above. Without qualitative context, presenting data alone doesn't tell the full story and risks leading to further disparities or harm. Reporting requirements could include feedback surveys or assessments of participant experiences related to the services/program supported by federal and state funding. They could also encourage or require sharing participant stories about the value of the experience received as a result of the funding.

3.

ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATIVE DATA.

In order to measure what matters, states must provide equitable access to the data needed for measurement, especially administrative data. Federal regulations require state Unemployment Insurance (UI) agencies to disclose employment and wage information that can be used to determine program eligibility for federally funded programs. Regulations also currently allow the use of UI wage records for the purposes of outcome reporting, including to measure the performance of WIOA's six core programs. For other skills training programs, federal regulations should encourage – and work to alleviate the barriers to establishing – data sharing agreements with state UI agencies to obtain this kind of data for outcome reporting and program evaluation purposes.

States must also capitalize on the existing federal regulations that expand access to cross-state labor market outcomes. For instance, states typically have a difficult time getting employment and wage information about people who work in another state (workers often do so because they've moved after completing their training program, or they live near a state boundary and routinely commute to another state for work). To satisfy WIOA requirements, the Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Labor (DOL) allow states to exchange employment and earnings data with other states, if they participate in the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS).³⁷ States can use SWIS for measuring

and reporting the performance of WIOA core programs, Eligible Training Providers, and partner programs to meet the requirements of a federal or state law or regulation.

States can also use SWIS to get *aggregate* data on partner programs not administered by ED and DOL, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While aggregate data enables less detailed research and reporting than individual-level data, it does allow states to know significantly more about the outcomes of these programs than they otherwise could. Since aggregate data can be broken down by subpopulations of interest, states can use it to understand the average earnings for certain subpopulations of interest participating in SNAP or TANF.

For data to be used effectively in continuous improvement efforts, access to data and disaggregated outcomes must be available not just to state agencies, but also to the local workforce boards, education and training providers, and community-based organizations where service delivery originates. Right now, local practitioners across the country report a widespread lack of access to administrative records on the employment and wage outcomes for the people they serve. Practitioners cannot fully assess what is working well or not at a local level when outcomes on the skills training participants aren't available, especially disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

WHAT IS THE COLLEGE TRANSPARENCY ACT?



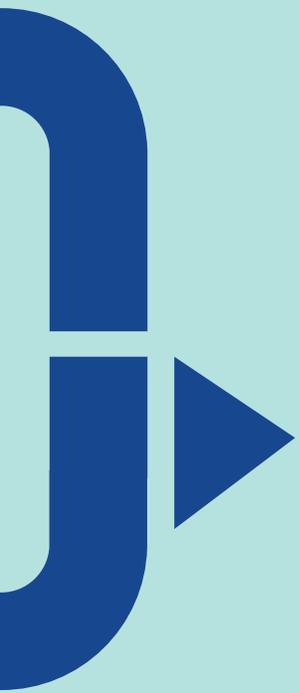
The College Transparency Act (CTA), which is currently included in the House-passed America COMPETES Act of 2022, is proposed federal bipartisan legislation that would help provide more complete information about college access, success, costs, and outcomes. Currently, the Higher Education Act prohibits the Department of Education from collecting data on all postsecondary students and disaggregating the data by race, ethnicity, and income level. The Department's existing College Scorecard, for example, only includes students receiving federal aid in its calculation of key metrics, like post-college earnings. This presents an incomplete picture of how well higher education and training programs are serving students. The CTA would overturn this outdated prohibition on data collection and would establish a privacy-protected postsecondary data system at the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education.

College is one of the biggest financial investments that most people will ever make. Students, workers, and families deserve access to secure, transparent, and easily accessible data that lets them know what education institutions and training programs will give them the best return on investment. This is particularly true for working learners who need to know how well a given program will meet their career goals while also balancing work, family, and other obligations. CTA will also enable employers to strengthen their talent pipeline by using data to find the

educational institutions and programs that are training individuals with the skills they need, coming out of this pandemic and in the years to come.

The College Transparency Act represents broad consensus among students, colleges and universities, employers, and policymakers that a secure, privacy-protected postsecondary student data system is the only way to give students the information they need to make informed college choices.





MAKE VISIBLE WHO'S BETTER OFF:

REPORT THE OUTCOMES OF SKILLS POLICIES

COVID-19's impacts have been unequal across workers and industries. We must have public, disaggregated data on the impact of recovery investments to ensure that everyone is a full and equal participant in our country's economic future. That includes publicly reporting on the economic outcomes (e.g., types of jobs, wages, credentials with labor market value, long-term career progression) enjoyed not just by workers who lost their jobs, but specifically by workers of color, immigrants, women, older workers, workers without a college degree, and others who have been most impacted by the pandemic.

From National Skills Coalition's *Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery*.³⁸



Simply collecting and disaggregating data on who is served by skills training policies is not the end goal. Policy and program outcomes must be transparent to the public and used by practitioners, federal and state agencies, and policymakers to ensure accountability and that investments are prioritizing those who are most impacted by economic shocks. Outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, income, and geography and their intersections are also needed to validate if skills policies are addressing racial equity gaps and to initiate corrective action when structural inequities are found to be present.

Key to reporting are robust data systems at the federal, state, and local levels. Funding for new data systems – or improvements to existing systems – is necessary to the successful expansion of data access and outcomes reporting. Connected data systems can also support data disaggregation when demographic characteristics are not collected uniformly across skills investments.

Numbers don't speak for themselves. It's important for federal, state, and local policymakers to seek local partner and stakeholder insight, particularly from practitioners, to contextualize program outcomes and identify the conditions that are contributing to or inhibiting progress towards closing racial equity gaps. Data analysts who report on outcomes from a distance may not have context on the unique challenges or barriers that stand in the way of more equitable outcomes. Proximity to the individuals and communities being served is also important when setting achievable goals to close racial equity gaps. Practitioners are best positioned to provide insight on how meaningful changes can meet the needs of workers and learners and close equity gaps. If policymakers, leaders, and practitioners are solely focused on compliance and not on understanding the conditions that help or hinder success then accountability efforts will not be successful.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

MANDATE PUBLIC REPORTING ON SKILLS TRAINING AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT OUTCOMES.

Within states, skills training advocates can play a powerful role in calling for and supporting state legislative and administrative efforts to require public reporting on the outcomes and impacts of publicly funded skills training programs. Calling for transparent outcomes reporting advances clarity on what data are being collected, what is being reported, and who has access to data. Advocates can also monitor how the state has implemented economic recovery plans and raise public awareness of equity gaps to hold agencies accountable.

At a state or local level, there are several examples of transparent reporting on the aggregate outcomes of skills training programs:

- Minnesota requires a report on participant outcomes for state-funded workforce programs. Outcomes are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, education, and housing status and available on a public dashboard.³⁹ Outcomes include short-, mid-, and long-term employment retention for participants who completed training or not, and attained a credential or not, as well as pre- and post-wage comparisons. This reporting is codified in state statute used by all local workforce development areas and community-based organizations who administer federal and state-funded workforce training programs. Program data is linked to administrative wage records to produce employment, wage, and industry outcomes.

- The Washington Training and Education Coordinating Board was established to create a more coordinated and accountable workforce system. Online reports track the results and return on investment for the state's largest workforce programs.⁴⁰ The Board developed a workforce economic recovery plan that includes transparently measuring progress towards an inclusive economic recovery.⁴¹ Data disaggregation, including race, ethnicity, income levels, disability, and veteran status, is cited as key to measuring progress for the state's communities.

Expanded data collection and public reporting has allowed states to more accurately measure how the public workforce and education systems are meeting states' workforce and postsecondary education equity and attainment goals. These expanded outcomes can also be used to:

- Set specific targets and measure/report progress for racial and ethnic groups,
- Expose gaps in service delivery,
- Identify if and how programs are demonstrating effectiveness, and
- Generate evidence on what interventions lead to economic mobility for various populations.

Appendix A provides model legislative text that incorporates the outcomes measures and data disaggregation that support an inclusive economic recovery. States can use this example to explore what would support expanded public reporting on the outcomes of skills training programs.

2.

PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR LINKED EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DATA SYSTEMS.

The landscape of state-level workforce data systems has advanced tremendously in recent years. Forty-one states currently connect some level of education and workforce data, with eighteen states having a fully integrated system of early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data.⁴² The U.S. Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants have allowed many states to more effectively link education and workforce systems to support data analysis. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) also raised the bar for requiring performance information and has motivated agencies within states to collaborate more on using data to improve workforce development programs.

In recent years, the U.S. Census Bureau piloted an extremely successful Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) data tool⁴³ that engages state higher education systems to link student-level data with administrative records to provide earnings and employment outcomes for full-time college and university graduates by degree level, degree major, and institution. There has also been growth in regional partnerships (e.g., Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange⁴⁴) and private-public partnerships (e.g., Coleridge Initiative's Administrative Data Research Facility⁴⁵) to link education and employment data systems across states.

States working to expand attainment of quality non-degree credentials have used their SLDS to link information from different programs across time. Utilizing SLDS can help states get an unduplicated count of credential attainment (since they can see if an individual has earned multiple credentials), understand the outcomes of individuals obtaining credentials by linking credential data with employment data, and know more about individual's education and career pathways. States can also use their SLDS to answer questions about non-degree credential attainment and employment outcomes for key demographics, including people of color, adult learners, veterans, and low-income individuals.





GOOD LABOR MARKET AND OUTCOMES DATA NEEDED TO SIGNAL CREDENTIAL QUALITY

The pandemic magnified the need for accurate, timely workforce data both to guide working adults toward the best quality retraining programs and to ensure data-informed policy decisions support an inclusive economic recovery. In the current environment – and across the country – more real-time, local labor market information is being used to analyze the skills and credentials needed in sectors facing trained worker shortages and to define occupations where a quality credential puts individuals on a career pathway towards a family-sustaining wage.



THE PANDEMIC MAGNIFIED THE NEED FOR ACCURATE, TIMELY WORKFORCE DATA BOTH TO GUIDE WORKING ADULTS TOWARD THE BEST QUALITY RETRAINING PROGRAMS AND TO ENSURE DATA-INFORMED POLICY DECISIONS SUPPORT AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

National Skills Coalition has worked with states to define and measure quality non-degree credentials and short-term training programs. These non-degree programs are seen by working adults and employers to be a flexible on-ramp to reskilling for in-demand jobs. States see them as a key component to reach their postsecondary attainment goals and as an economic recovery response to reconnect working adults to further postsecondary education and training opportunities.

Through this work, NSC has established a consensus definition that a quality non-degree credential is one that provides individuals with the means to equitably achieve their informed employment and educational goals. There must be valid, reliable, and transparent evidence that the credential satisfies the criteria that constitute quality and that public investment aligns with those programs and credentials that have been proven to produce quality outcomes for learners. Many states are continuing to align and improve their data infrastructure, policies, and guidance in ways that reflect this definition and the quality assurance frameworks they're developing for these short-term training programs and credentials.

Data on job openings and employer feedback on the skills and quality credentials needed in the hiring, promotion, and retention process is necessary for this work. Local industry sector



partnerships are taking a leadership role in shaping retraining strategies to meet their skill needs while providing pathways for workers to good jobs in demand. Quantitative data and employer input should be the foundation for measuring substantial job opportunities. While what is considered “substantial” will vary by state or region, data is needed to evaluate the market demand for the occupations that credentials are associated with. Use of real-time labor market data, existing sector partnerships, or emerging industries that represent a regional economic development strategy are all potential sources to inform whether or not employers demand the credential.

Disaggregated data on the employment and wage outcomes of training programs are essential for understanding what credentials meet a quality threshold and have value for workers and businesses. While most states already have data about some postsecondary programs, the data are often not comprehensive. Many states are working to improve the data available on short-term, non-credit programs offered by public institutions, data about who obtains industry certifications, or any certificates that are awarded by private institutions.

By improving information on the likely employment and earnings outcomes associated with specific training programs and communicating that information clearly, states can:

- Make informed decisions about where to invest public dollars that support programs and learners;
- Help workers save time and money;
- Make it easier for businesses to identify talent and address emerging skill needs; and
- Offer guidance to education and training providers on which credentials they should offer and how to think about designing new credentials or program offerings with an eye to increasing return on investment for learners and maximizing alignment with labor market needs.

For more information, please see:

- [Expanding Opportunities: Defining Quality Non-Degree Credentials for States⁴⁶](#)
- [Creating an Impact with Credential Quality and Transparency⁴⁷](#)
- [Emerging Innovations in Data Transparency, Governance and Quality⁴⁸](#)



**WE MUST
HAVE PUBLIC,
DISAGGREGATED
DATA ON THE
IMPACT OF RECOVERY
INVESTMENTS
TO ENSURE THAT
EVERYONE IS A
FULL AND EQUAL
PARTICIPANT IN
OUR COUNTRY'S
ECONOMIC FUTURE.**

APPENDIX A:

MODEL LEGISLATIVE TEXT TO MANDATE PUBLIC REPORTING ON SKILLS TRAINING OUTCOMES

Below is an example of legislative text that would support expanded public reporting on the outcomes of skills training programs. Policymakers and advocates are encouraged to use this language as the basis for new legislation in their states.

Section 1. Requirements.

The [list name of agency] shall develop and implement a uniform outcome measurement and reporting system for adult workforce-related programs funded in whole or in part by state funds.

Section 2. Definitions.

- (a) For the purposes of this section, the terms defined in this section have the meanings given.
- (b) "Credential" means postsecondary degrees, diplomas, licenses, and certificates awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance in an occupation. The credential can be based on the attainment of academic credit or obtained through a non-degree credential program.
- (c) "Exit" means to have not received service under a workforce program [for a set number of days]. The exit date is the last date of service.
- (d) "Pre-enrollment" means a set period of time before an individual was enrolled in a workforce program.

Section 3. Skills training program outcomes.

- (a) By [date] the [agency, agencies listed] must report the following information separately for each program subject to the requirements of section 1:

- (1) the total number of participants enrolled;
- (2) the median pre-enrollment wages based on participant wages for the second through the fifth calendar quarters immediately preceding the quarter of enrollment;
- (3) the total number of participants enrolled in training, by occupational group;
- (4) the total number of participants that exited the program during the year;
- (5) the total number of exited participants who completed training;
- (6) the total number of exited participants who attained a credential;
- (7) the total number of participants employed two quarters immediately following the quarter of exit, by industry;
- (8) the median wages of participants employed two quarters immediately following the quarter of exit;
- (9) the total number of participants employed four quarters immediately following the quarter of exit, by industry;
- (10) the median wages of participants employed four quarters immediately following the quarter of exit;
- (11) the total number of participants employed eight quarters immediately following the quarter of exit, by industry;
- (12) the median wages of participants employed during eight quarters immediately following the quarter of exit;

(b) The report must contain disaggregated participant information by race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, income, and [geographic] region, including a comparison of exited participants who completed training and attained a credential, and those who did not, so the state is able to successfully evaluate the effectiveness of skills training programs to connect individuals to high quality training that meets the needs of businesses and to measure progress towards closing equity gaps.

Additional outcome measures that states could require:

- **Include expanded measures on job quality.** Administrative wage records serve as a key resource for understanding if participants of skills training programs are finding employment. Some states do collect additional items in their Unemployment Insurance wage files, like hours worked. A quarterly measurement of hours worked allows for the calculation of hourly wage rate, as well as full- and part-time employment status, which can be a helpful signal of job quality, as a full-time job is more likely to offer benefits.
- **Include a measure of occupation-specific job placement.** A small number of states also collect workers' occupations from employers in their wage files.⁴⁹ Occupational information provides greater context on what an individual does on the job than an industry code, which is more commonly used to signify what goods or services a business primarily engages in creating or providing. Occupational information would allow for a "training-related job placement" measure of the alignment between the occupation for which

the training provider is designed and the occupation when an individual obtains employment. The state of Washington will soon be requesting occupational data from employers as a part of their Unemployment Insurance reporting. The legislative bill to expand data collection explains that it will ..."allow for more accurate occupational trend analyses, and more effective evaluation of education and training programs and whether or not they lead to particular occupations."⁵⁰

- **Include other demographic characteristics that aid in identifying equity gaps.** There are many additional characteristics that may be important to identify equity gaps in skills training access and credential attainment, including age, disability status, gender identify, housing status or instability, justice involvement, and sexual orientation. States should prioritize additional characteristics necessary to meet state education and workforce equity goals. It is important to assess how widely available a particular demographic characteristic is collected across skills training programs, as well as the quality of the data collected. For instance, if a characteristic is optional or does not have a sufficient response rate, any outcomes produced may not be representative of individuals with that lived experience. It's also important to ensure that data collection, analysis, and reporting on demographic characteristics is based on strong data ethic principles, data privacy protections, and principles of use. This includes, but isn't limited to, protecting personally identifiable information when releasing summary data for public reporting.

APPENDIX B:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: Data collected on individuals or businesses during the administration of a government program.

RACIAL EQUITY⁵¹: Racial equity is achieved when race or immigration status is no longer correlated with one's outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live. An example of achieving racial equity in workforce development is when race or immigration status no longer determines the likelihood of a participant's completion of a training program or their educational attainment.

STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS (SLDS) OR P-20W DATA SYSTEMS: State-level data infrastructure that securely brings together specific data on early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary education, and the workforce so leaders, practitioners, and community members can better understand the progress, predictors, and performance of learners along their educational and employment pathways.

STRUCTURAL RACISM⁵²: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'color' to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic, and political systems in which we all exist.

SUMMARY DATA: Summary data refers to statistical records and reports that aggregate data on individuals in a way that neither a specific individual is identifiable, nor the unique identities or other characteristics of that individual are knowable.

ENDNOTES

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- 19 <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/blog/higher-education/workforce-update-workers-without-a-college-degree-are-disproportionately-impacted-by-covid-19-job-losses/>
- 20 <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html> This is an experimental survey of households to measure how the pandemic is impacting households from a social and economic perspective. The survey measures core demographic household characteristics, as well as questions about education, employment, food sufficiency, childcare arrangements, household spending, housing security and physical and mental health. Recent surveys have included data disaggregated by sexual orientation and gender identity.
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- 22 <https://covid-relief-data.ed.gov/>
- 23 <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/> These data are essential to institutions and policymakers to understand inequities in earnings of former students and how to implement and refine programs, policies, and investments to close those gaps.
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ABOUT NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

Jobs that require skills training are the backbone of our economy. National Skills Coalition fights for a national commitment to inclusive, high-quality skills training so that more people have access to a better life, and more businesses see sustained growth. Since 2000, through expert analysis, and technical assistance, broad-based organizing, targeted advocacy, and cutting-edge communication, NSC has changed hundreds of state and federal skills policies that have changed thousands of lives and grown local businesses and economies.

We build networks representing businesses, workers, colleges, community organizations, public officials, and advocates. We engage these networks to craft policy proposals and mobilize them to win concrete policy change.

Our networks include SkillSPAN (twenty affiliate state coalitions), Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships (thousands of small and medium-sized business owners and fourteen state affiliates), and Voices for Skills (tens of thousands of workers and grassroots skills advocates).

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