Outcomes from Transitions in Education and Work: Developing a Scalable Regional Approach – guiding questions

Synthesized responses from workshop Attendees

Disclaimer: the below are synthesized from the seven responses that were received by Friday, Sep 21; as such they may not represent the diversity of views represented at the Workshop.

Which pathways are of greatest interest?

In general, different demographic or socioeconomic groups' pathways are of most interest – be they low-income, eligible for specific programs, of certain age ranges or ethnicities, or with specific educational attainment. There is also common interest those pathways that lead to successful outcomes, where success was in once case defined as "sustainable employment with living wages", or, more generally, as better or positive outcomes. Additionally, a few respondents focused, at least in part, on identifying if there are specific (i) industries, (ii) topics of study (eg STEM), or (iii) measurements (eg if access to transportation influences participation or completion in a program) which influence pathways.

What outcomes are of greatest interest?

Almost universally, some measure of employment – eg receiving wages, gainful employment, sustained employment – was cited as the outcome of highest interest. The second most common set of metrics were completion and graduation rates of training and education programs, respectively. A few responses included an explicit time component in outcome measures, such as time to degree or employment. Lastly, one response included measuring cross-state comparisons while another mentioned employment in high-demand occupations.

How do you currently generate the information you need?

Organizations that administer programs, be they education or workforce based, responded that they, unsurprisingly, use at least their own data to generate metrics of interest while two responded that they get information from some external party. All respondents except one said they use data from at least one other organization or program to generate their information. The sources that were explicitly mentioned were the National Student Clearinghouse, wage records, tax data, job vacancy survey data, and FAFSA filings.

What are your two or three biggest "asks" for data to get better information?

The single most common "ask" was to incorporate data from other organizations – either across state lines or from organizations focused primarily on a separate topic (ie organizations

with an education mandate want workforce data and vice versa). Access to data over a longer time horizon was also common across multiple responses. A couple groups mentioned more granular data, such as access to information on occupations or hours worked in wage data or non-credential programs and transfers between schools/programs. One response explicitly mentioned interest in alternate ways to link individual level data rather than SSN.

What are the two or three biggest barriers to getting the better information?

Respondents mentioned three primary barriers to getting better information: (i) legal barriers in the form of legislation or statutes that restrict how specific datasets of interest are used or shared across organizations or jurisdictions, (ii) budget limitations which manifest in insufficient computing infrastructure or personnel to perform or maintain analyses, and (iii) the lack of commonly defined approaches to presenting or calculating metrics of education and workforce. Two responses also mentioned the technical aspects of sharing data or producing metrics as barriers to getting information.

What do you see as the most important next steps necessary to advance cross state and cross agency activities?

The two most common next steps mentioned were to clarify specific research questions – and necessary datasets for those questions – in order to ensure the correct parties are brought to the table and to create a common, collaborative data governance structure. A common governance structure was cited as important to both inform how data agreements are created or processed as well as provide structure around how projects, especially those using data from multiple agencies, should be tracked and reviewed.