Workforce Data Initiative

The architecture to support a 21st century workforce ecosystem

The Workforce Data Initiative will establish the data architecture for the next generation of workforce innovation – allowing for the creation of more effective applications, policies, and services for job seekers, employers, government programs, local workforce agencies, researchers, online job boards, and recruitment platforms.

The mission of the Workforce Data Initiative is to enable interoperability between workforce data across the public and private sectors, and facilitate standards, structure, and easy access points for the data underlying **training**, **skills**, **jobs**, *and* **wages**. This includes three strategic pillars:

1) **A common language for skill needs** – With leadership from the Department of Labor and O*NET, we'll work in partnership with private sector job boards, recruitment platforms, and employers to establish a common skills taxonomy. This clearinghouse—our "Skills Co-op"—will be available via open APIs, which allow for collaborative innovation via a new "give/get" model of information about skills required for jobs, taught in training, and acquired by individuals.

2) **Information on education and training outcomes** – Work towards more open, standardized information about training programs and their employment outcomes - simultaneously providing common reporting taxonomy.

3) **Prototyping products** with industry partners who use newly integrated workforce data via open APIs.

New applications built on open data have revolutionized other industries, and this Initiative will do the same for the workforce. In the 1980s and 90s, the U.S. government opened weather and GPS data to the public – making it freely available to developers and entrepreneurs. The private-sector responded with whole ecosystems of new applications and services. Today, industry built on weather data is estimated at $10 billion and industry due to GPS data is estimated at $90 billion. Workforce training and development is already a $140 billion industry, even without an interoperable data architecture. The Workforce Data Initiative will help overcome the opacity and deep inefficiencies resulting from a lack of interoperability, which currently inhibits growth and innovation. Some of the challenges it will improve include:

- Unnecessary replication and confusion across platforms for both job seekers and employers
- Lack of insight into the full economic picture of the country for research and policy-making
- Ineffective public and private sector investments in workforce development and opportunity creation
- Citizens disconnected from the training opportunities and skills development programs they seek

By establishing the connective tissue between the data that tell us about the workforce in detail -- training, skills, jobs, and wages – the Workforce Data Initiative will allow for the development of innovative products that connect people to jobs that are well-suited to their skills – as well as help people learn how to develop new skills for jobs to which they aspire.

Imagine one example: When we're done, it will be possible for a 27 year old, community college dropout living in Milwaukee to use a new web application to enter current job, location, and a wage they'd like to be making. The app could then return results for *related careers* that make the desired salary; *what skills* this new career would require; *what training* is available near their location to attain those skills; and which of those trainings have provided the *best results* for their participants. This is just a single example of the countless applications that developers can't build now, but could with robust, interoperable workforce data.