

## Strengthening the Workforce Data Ecosystem

The Trump administration should prioritize actions to strengthen the workforce development data ecosystem, including data related to programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This action is essential because:

- Critical gaps in the availability and reliability of workforce data for transparency, analysis, and improvement have hamstrung decisionmaking at every level—ranging from individual job seekers to workforce providers and employers to state, local, and federal policymakers. Data on education and training programs, such as participants’ demographics, costs, and earnings and employment outcomes, are often scattered, incomplete, or outdated.<sup>1</sup> For example, public outcomes data are available for a shockingly low proportion of WIOA eligible training providers, and available data often exclude participants working out of state.<sup>2</sup>
- Twenty-one national workforce, data, and advocacy organizations have joined together to identify priorities for reform and to call on federal policymakers to address them. These organizations are ready to share their insights, expertise, and perspectives.<sup>3</sup>
- The Department of Labor (DOL) is well-positioned to take swift action building on recent progress. For example, under the first Trump administration, DOL launched the first public database of WIOA training provider outcomes. DOL’s Employment and Training Administration already includes requirements that essential information about providers, credentials, and outcomes be made public as linked, open, and interoperable data for some grant recipients—requirements that can easily be expanded.

**DOL should partner with federal agencies such as the Departments of Education (ED) and Commerce (DOC), state and local leaders, and nonprofit and for-profit stakeholders to advance the following priorities.**

### Near-Term Actions

In the first 100 days, we urge the Trump administration to take the following steps:

- **Advance guidance and technical assistance on state wage data linkages.** The lack of clear, specific guidance and technical assistance on sharing wage data, particularly unemployment insurance (UI) wage data, for WIOA reporting and analysis (as well as aligned programs such as Perkins) has made states and other actors hesitant to move forward. DOL should build on existing joint guidance with ED to clarify states’ ability to link wage and workforce data, including through cross-state and multi-state initiatives.<sup>4</sup> We understand that DOL is actively pursuing guidance and technical assistance on this question following a related RFI last fall; this should be a top priority to get out the door.<sup>5</sup>
- **Increase and clarify funding for workforce data infrastructure.** The administration’s first budget request should ask for a significant increase in funding for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), the core federal funding for workforce data infrastructure, access, and use. We recommend increasing annual

<sup>1</sup> See <https://americaforward.medium.com/making-workforce-data-work-for-students-and-job-seekers-108ea139ba87>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.pw.hks.harvard.edu/post/publicjobtraining/>.

<sup>3</sup> Signatories include America Forward, Apprenticeships for America, Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), Coleridge Initiative, Credential Engine, Data Quality Campaign, FutureFit AI, Jobs for the Future, JVS – Bay Area, National Association of Workforce Boards, National Skills Coalition, Opportunity@Work, Per Scholas, Progressive Policy Institute, Propel America, REDF, Results for America, Social Finance, Inc., TNTP, Third Sector Capital Partners, and Year Up, Inc. See <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Workforce-Data-Reforms.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See [https://rsa.ed.gov/sites/default/files/subregulatory/final-ferpa-tegl-report\\_0.pdf](https://rsa.ed.gov/sites/default/files/subregulatory/final-ferpa-tegl-report_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See recommendations from a coalition of stakeholders here:

<https://dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/DQC-USDOL-UC-Wage-Record-RFI.pdf>

funding from \$6 million to at least \$40 million per year. In addition, DOL, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and partner agencies (e.g., ED, DOC, Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (HHS/ACF)) should build on OMB's 2024 revision to the Uniform Grants Guidance<sup>6</sup> by issuing joint guidance clarifying states' ability to use existing funds from their agencies' programs for data system priorities.

### Longer-Term Actions

Over the first year, the Trump administration should prioritize the following actions:

- **Improve TrainingProviderResults.gov.** DOL's public reporting on WIOA-eligible training provider outcomes should be improved, building on the first Trump Administration's efforts: by one account, more than 75% of listed programs have no data on enrollment or outcomes.<sup>7</sup> To support a transparent, effective marketplace for training, DOL must improve this resource—for instance, by publicly reporting on longer-term earnings and demographic data that is already collected.<sup>8</sup> We also encourage DOL to ensure this data is available through the use of linked, open, and open-source data formats and schema, such as through the credential transparency description language (CTDL) standards,<sup>9</sup> so that data can be used for evidence building and continuous improvement.
- **Partner with state and other federal agencies and stakeholders to ease the burden of accessing federal labor market outcomes data.** Building on the guidance and technical assistance we recommend above, DOL should pursue a centralized, secure, privacy-protected approach to support analysis of national labor market data (e.g., from IRS or National Directory of New Hires). This approach could involve direct linkages, an exchange, or a clearinghouse structure and enable both public agencies and private providers to access this data for reporting, performance management, continuous improvement, and evaluation purposes.<sup>10</sup> While the State Wage Interchange System enables states to share labor market participant data for the purpose of reporting, in practice it can be challenging to use those systems for anything beyond basic reporting.
- **Expand privacy technical assistance.** Building on near-term wage data guidance and support, DOL should partner with federal agencies to address the confusing patchwork of privacy laws and policies. Potentially partnering with ED's Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), DOL should pursue a national privacy center that can share innovative approaches to data privacy and security, demystify existing privacy requirements, and help stakeholders navigate specific privacy questions.<sup>11</sup>
- **Support the pilot expansion of wage records.** Alongside leveraging national data sources, DOL and other agencies (e.g., ED, DOC, HHS/ACF) should support and provide technical assistance for efforts to incorporate standardized information available from wage records (job titles, hours worked (e.g., full-time, part-time, job-required skills, and job codes) through data standards such as JEDx.<sup>12</sup>
- **Continue to engage stakeholders.** Building on its 2024 listening sessions, DOL should continue to engage key stakeholders such as states, localities, and Tribal governments; innovative providers; state and national associations; employers; and workers themselves to inform the design of a stronger system. Participants, navigators, and others can help DOL and other relevant agencies understand what resources and tools they need (be they a state or locally developed dashboard, resource, or other tool). Stakeholders also can play a key role in providing technical capacity and resources.

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2024-04-22/pdf/2024-07496.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.pw.hks.harvard.edu/post/publicjobtraining>

<sup>8</sup> See technical recommendations here:

<https://www.americaforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/America-Forward-Coalition-DOL-2022-Open-Data-RFI-Response-National-Employment-Metrics-System.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> CTDL is the family of de facto standards for making descriptions of credentials and other resources available as data for search and discovery and cross-system interoperability. It acts as a large dictionary of terms available for creating descriptions using all of the terms or only those terms that meet your needs. See: <https://credentialengine.org/credential-transparency/ctdl/>

<sup>10</sup> Two possible structures for this clearinghouse approach are described in more detail [here](#) and [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> See <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/solutions/workforce-development-and-training/jedx>