

STATE-FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

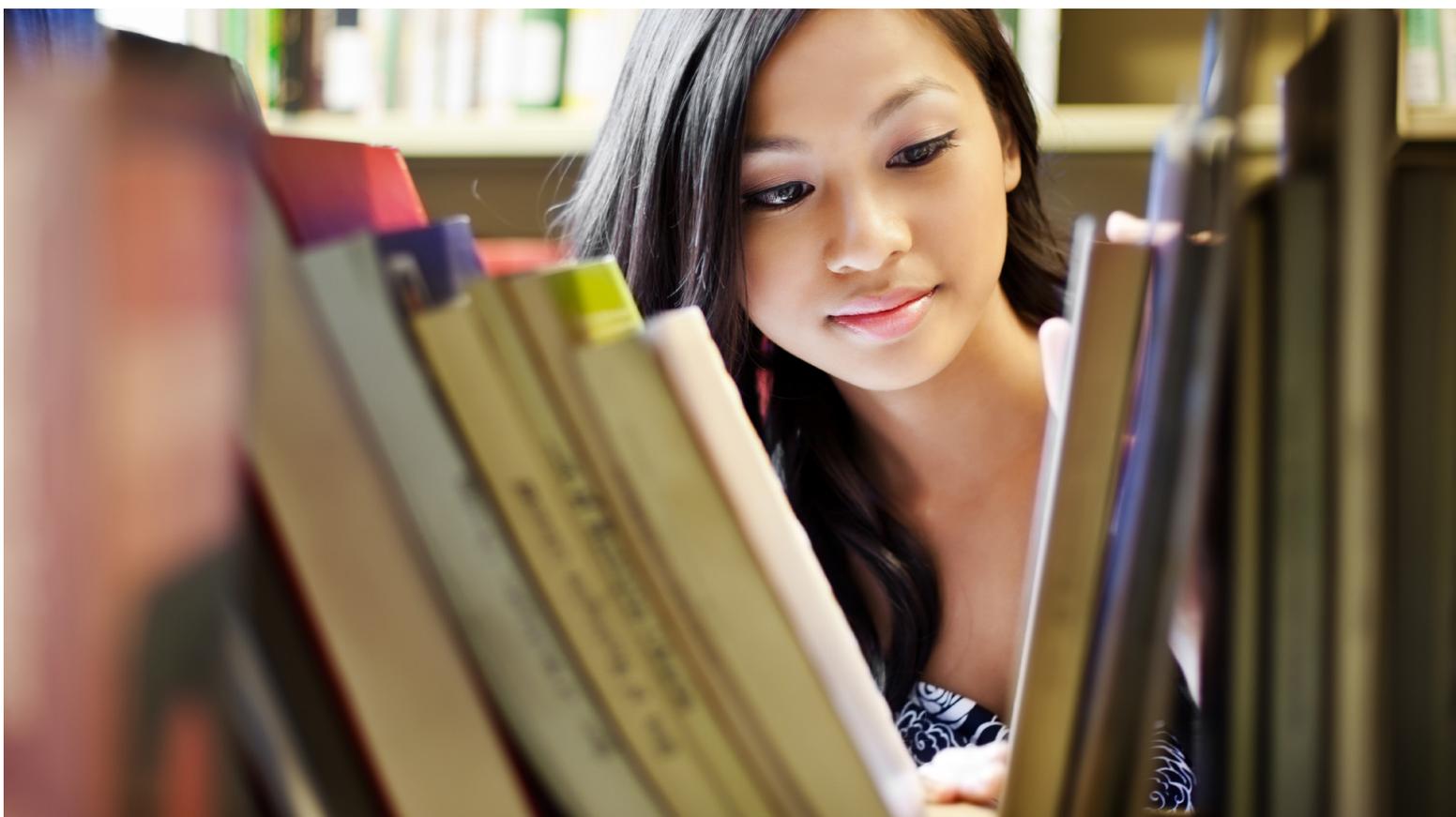
LEVERAGING COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT: A BLUEPRINT FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS



EDUCATION
COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

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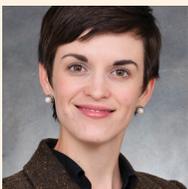
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The success of our nation's economy rests within our communities. Our workforce is built on the strengths of individuals, those educated in our colleges and employed by our dynamic businesses. In order to create a thriving workforce development system - one that supports individuals' needs and bolsters employers' supply of skilled workers - we must create a coordinated, efficient set of policies and programs. This is possible through a federated approach, where federal, state, and local policymakers; educational institutions; and the non-profit and private sectors come together to build a better system.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 offers multiple opportunities to align the workforce development efforts of these stakeholders through structural measures and targeted support. In this paper, we examine ways that WIOA can influence a state's job training environment and highlight the crucial role of community colleges in this effort. We offer four key ways these institutions can be leveraged in WIOA to create a more effective and cohesive system:

1. State and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) can build sector partnerships that leverage community colleges and other education and training providers to develop career pathways that align workforce supply and demand. WIOA emphasizes the value of recognized postsecondary credentials, and the attention given to career pathways in the act provides a way for community colleges to contribute to the growth of skilled and credentialed workers in their local areas.
2. Community colleges designated as an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) can offer programs that qualify for WIOA support. Eligible job-seekers can defray the cost of participating in these programs using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Students in accredited programs may be able to combine ITAs with federal student aid, maximizing support as they gain new skills or retrain for a new field of work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Governors can use the state set-aside fund to align job-seekers' need for employment and local employers' need for skilled workers, leveraging the training capacity of local community colleges to prepare workers for employment in growing fields in their region.

4. State policymakers should engage community college leaders at the state level to contribute to the development and implementation of the state economic development plan. This can be accomplished through the inclusion of community college representatives on the state WDB and through their input on the state economic development plan.

While this paper is directed toward state policymakers, WIOA is an example of how federal policy can be constructed to accomplish national goals while also allowing states appropriate flexibility to best serve their unique interests and populations. As we look to improve the outcomes of our nation's students, such coordinated efforts are the best approach to achieve long-term, sustainable policy reforms.





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INTRODUCTION

The demand for highly educated workers in the United States currently outstrips the supply. By the close of this decade, an estimated 65 percent of our nation's jobs will require some form of higher education or job training.¹ Only through coordinated efforts among stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels can this demand for education and training be met.

The capacity, proximity and open-access mission of community colleges make them a vital actor in equipping job-seekers with skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. Building on the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) offers states further opportunities to capitalize on federal funding for coordination among institutions and other stakeholders. With final WIOA regulations released on June 30, 2016, the time is ripe to explore ways in which this federal policy can improve collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including state governments, community colleges, and business and industry.

In this paper, we discuss the state and local structures of WIOA, including sector partnerships, career pathways, workforce development boards,

set-aside funds, and individual training accounts. Throughout, we highlight how community colleges can be integrated as key players in WIOA-mandated governance structures and programmatic initiatives to encourage fruitful connections between job-seekers and employers. We believe this project can provide a blueprint for state leaders looking to develop innovative, integrated workforce systems, and that the results can inform future federal policies on state and local investment in higher education.

Although our primary audience is state policymakers interested in leveraging WIOA funds, this paper also illustrates how federal policy can accommodate the needs of states, localities and institutions. The hallmark piece of postsecondary education legislation - the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) - mostly funnels funding to and through colleges. WIOA provides an example of how federal dollars can be distributed to states and structured to accomplish national goals while still providing flexibility needed to address local concerns. Such a model may be advantageous as we consider reauthorizing HEA and addressing pertinent issues such as high costs, institutional accountability, accreditation reform and state disinvestment.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT'S ORIGINS AND STRUCTURE

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed WIOA into law, which Congress passed with strong bipartisan support.² WIOA reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which was a federal effort to align the needs of the nation's businesses with those of job-seekers. Prior to the passage of WIA, federal resources were directed to states through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982. When JTPA was replaced by WIA, planning and implementation of workforce development activities became more driven by the needs of state and local entities in both the public and private sectors. Two of WIA's contributions were the creation of one-stop employment centers, where individuals could gather information and resources on available job training, education, and employment services, and the introduction of individual training accounts, which offered eligible job-seekers more autonomy in choosing and accessing job-training.³ These one-stop shops were set up in communities designated as "workforce investment areas" by state Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), which created and supervised five-year strategic workforce development plans.⁴ WIOA provisions were required to take effect on July 1, 2015.⁵

Like WIA, WIOA directs funds from the federal government to state and local governing bodies to address workforce training needs across their unique communities. WIOA's formula distributes funding to states based on levels of youth, adult and dislocated

worker unemployment with special attention paid to particularly disadvantaged regions and individuals. Eighty-five percent of each state's WIOA funds are directed to local workforce areas and the remaining 15 percent can be used by governors to invest in workforce development initiatives of their choosing.⁶

Although WIOA can be primarily categorized as a workforce policy, it emphasizes postsecondary education as a means to developing a skilled workforce. In recent years, improved pathways from early childhood to postsecondary education, and from college into the workforce, have become an increased area of focus for policymakers. WIOA may provide an example of how our federalist system can encourage coordination and shared responsibility among our governing bodies, states and institutions.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Broadly, WIOA seeks to bridge the needs of job-seekers and employers through available training and other support measures.⁷ State policymakers must determine the key actors in their states and engage them early and often in order to most effectively develop a talented workforce. We believe that community colleges can serve a key role in this mission. The open-access mission, low cost, and local governance of community colleges lends them the accessibility, experience and flexibility to offer a wide range of educational opportunities attuned

to local job seekers' needs. Though community colleges have long offered opportunities to engage in workforce training, WIOA highlights the importance and value of "recognized postsecondary credentials," emphasizing the integral role that community colleges and other institutions of higher education play in today's workforce development system.⁸

This paper will examine ways that community colleges can be leveraged in pursuit of this mission. While community colleges are one of many moving parts in the broader state workforce development system, they are uniquely poised to offer programs geared toward developing a workforce that fulfills the desired outcomes of the state. Community colleges can be a primary player in WIOA initiatives by engaging in the following:

- Participating in sector partnerships and career pathways that support the comprehensive needs of job-seekers.
- Providing job-driven educational programs in high-demand areas with the support of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and WIOA-supported training contracts.
- Working with local employers with support from state set-aside funds to align training programs at community colleges with jobs in growing fields.
- Serving on state and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and contributing to the state economic plan.

WIOA includes several points where the opportunity to access federal funding meets the existing capacity and flexibility of community colleges. We hope this paper provides useful recommendations that serve as a starting point for a more integrated, responsive and efficient workforce development system that supports the needs of workers and the unique economies of our states.

THOUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGES HAVE LONG OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN WORKFORCE TRAINING, WIOA HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF "RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS," EMPHASIZING THE INTEGRAL ROLE THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PLAY IN TODAY'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.⁸

CREATING CAREER PATHWAYS THROUGH LOCAL SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

WIOA provides an opportunity for states to foster cross-sector collaboration and pathways from training programs into the workforce. Each state can create regional and local sector partnerships, which connect various constituents in the state economy to streamline preparation of the workforce. These coalitions, which include local employers, education and training providers, nonprofit organizations, and labor organizations, meet to develop and implement plans to address workforce skill gaps.⁹ Local partnerships are determined by the local WDB, which funds sector partnerships through adult and dislocated worker monies.¹⁰ WIOA state set-aside funds may also be used to support sector partnerships,¹¹ and states may further supplement this funding with other state resources.¹²

Sector partnerships can be leveraged to develop career pathways, which use a comprehensive approach to providing job-seekers with high-quality education, career guidance, and training. Career pathways programs must allow participants to earn at least one postsecondary credential and assist participants in attaining a position in a relevant occupation.¹³ As evidenced in the following examples, pathways created by local partnerships with the support of education providers can keep the needs of their communities and key business sectors at the forefront.

Colorado details their existing framework for the development of career pathways in their WIOA state plan, naming the formation of sector partnerships

as the first step in the process.¹⁴ By convening business, education, and other stakeholders in a sector partnership, participants can coalesce around shared goals and skill gaps and align available resources. Once skill gaps and other barriers have been identified, partnership members work to create clear, concrete steps that job-seekers can take to acquire the skills they need to succeed in growing occupations in that sector. While sector partnerships are industry-led, the Colorado model places leadership in the development of career pathways in the hands of non-industry members, such as education providers. In addition to the value of education and training providers in local sector partnerships, this framework emphasizes the leading role that community colleges and other training providers can take in moving from shared sector goals to efficient career pathways that meet job-seeker and employer needs.¹⁵

Alaska's WIOA state plan includes a similar strategy to leverage sector-based relationships to develop career pathways. The plan names several industries key to Alaska's economy and charges the state WDB with engaging sector partnerships in each one, making sure to include public-sector and private-sector stakeholders and using workforce data to assess skill levels and future workforce needs. The work of each sector partnership will culminate in the development of career pathways connecting Alaskans to relevant education and training designed to meet occupational needs. Specifically, the state

plan outlines an initiative, Clean Energy Vocational Training for Alaska's Future, which convenes education and training providers to assess sector skill needs and the availability of existing training programs. From there, participants will develop a workforce plan that includes the development of career pathways that leverages career and technical education and intersects with the K-12 system. This sector-based project is designed to address both the needs of rural and remote Alaskans and the workforce needs in the growing field of clean energy by bringing together multiple stakeholders and making use of education providers that offer opportunities to learn applicable skills from childhood onward.¹⁶

Community colleges can serve as key players in both sector partnerships and career pathways. Local WDBs, which are required to have a representative from a nearby educational institution that offers workforce programs, are tasked with making sure that their area is fulfilling workforce development activity requirements, including the development of sector partnerships. These representatives can provide insight into the college's existing wrap-around services, such as flexible course scheduling, adult basic education courses, remedial and co-requisite programs, child care facilities, and food pantries. Community college representatives can note where resources are lacking and identify critical points in students' postsecondary journeys where they may require more support in order to stay enrolled. Many colleges also have experience working with area businesses and community-based organizations, thereby serving as a point of confluence between a variety of sectors. Furthermore, while local WDBs are responsible for making sure that WIOA requirements for sector partnerships are being met,¹⁷ these sector partnerships can be managed or led by a number of partners, including community colleges.

New connections fostered by sector partnerships at the local and state level leading to clear career pathways offer increased structure for students and a source of skilled labor for employers, a critical area where alignment in the state workforce development system can impact student outcomes. WDBs can work with community colleges and other stakeholders in sector partnerships to develop and implement career pathways that build students' skills and knowledge and produce a credential of value to employers. These local efforts, when integrated with the broader state-based initiatives, can create a more comprehensive ecosystem of workforce development, wherein students are completing training in areas of need, providing a clear path to securing employment and bolstering the state's economic productivity.

**NEW CONNECTIONS
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USING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO MEET INDIVIDUAL JOB TRAINING NEEDS

An effective workforce development initiative considers what students bring to the table along with desired outcomes to create an effective job-training environment. Job-seekers bring a variety of skills and experiences to a training program and providers must be able to meet their needs and prepare them for work in high-demand fields. Community colleges are experienced in serving a wide variety of students and in offering a diverse set of programmatic options. The structure, capacity and flexibility of community college programs therefore makes them an ideal partner in workforce development efforts, and WIOA helps facilitate their inclusion in state and local job training initiatives.

WIOA offers institutions of higher education that offer workforce training programs the opportunity to seek designation as an Eligible Training Provider (ETP). When a college is designated as an ETP, it can establish contracts with local WDBs to offer training services for individuals to acquire needed skills in high-demand fields.^{18, 19} This status also allows providers to accept ITAs, which eligible students can use to cover some fees associated with enrollment.²⁰ While ITAs cannot be used for all programs offered by an ETP, they can be applied to specific programs deemed eligible for WIOA support.²¹ In areas with few ETPs, providers may also enter into contracts to provide training for a group of students rather than accepting ITA funds from individuals.²² The

opportunity to accept ITAs or enter into contracts allows ETPs to offer training connected to local workforce needs to a variety of students who stand to benefit from it.

Job-seekers in some WIOA-eligible programs who qualify for ITA funds may also be able to access Pell Grants if they complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), have demonstrated financial need, and require more assistance than ITAs can offer to meet educational costs. While ITA vouchers cover the cost of training, required fees, and materials for approved programs, Pell Grants can be used to cover living expenses while students are enrolled in workforce training programs, which can include items such as transportation and child care. ITAs also offer an important source of aid to students who do not qualify for federal student aid or who are enrolled in a non-credit program. With the resources offered by ITAs and, in some cases, additional student aid, students can access job training at community colleges to build skills or earn a credential.

In places where relevant training programs do not exist in high-demand fields, community colleges can respond to local workforce needs by developing new credit or non-credit programs. Credit-based courses are intended to lead a student toward a degree or certificate and therefore make those enrolled

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eligible for federal financial aid. Non-credit courses, which are not counted toward degree programs but may lead to a certificate of completion, are intended to provide continuing education and can be developed to meet urgent workforce training needs. Though many colleges do not offer federal student aid for non-credit programs, some have structured non-credit programs so that students can access Pell Grants.²³ While credit and non-credit programs exist within other types of colleges, community colleges are particularly well-suited to provide job training opportunities because they already offer a variety of short and long-term programs with more flexible schedules at a relatively low cost.

WIOA incorporates a variety of ways for postsecondary institutions to be partners in training job-seekers for placement in high-demand fields. The combination of job training experience and programmatic flexibility at community colleges makes them an ideal partner in workforce development initiatives, and designation as an ETP can help them be more responsive to state and local needs, as well as student financial needs.

LEVERAGING SET-ASIDE FUNDS TO MEET STATE-SPECIFIC NEEDS

While 85 percent of WIOA funding must be directed toward programs for dislocated workers, adults, and youth, 15 percent of funds are designated as a state “set-aside” managed by the governor. These set-aside funds can be merged to cover statewide activities that pertain to the other areas.²⁴ These flexible monies can be used to develop and support innovative partnerships and collaborations between the educational and business sectors, as is demonstrated in the following examples.

In its WIOA Plan, the state of Washington identified three initiatives it intended to support in 2015-16 using the governor’s set-aside funds, each addressing a specific workforce development need in the state. First, Washington designated \$2.5 million to continue a competitive grant program devoted to increasing opportunities for youth by providing guidance on next steps in their career paths as well as work and internship opportunities. Second, Washington’s plan included \$250,000 devoted to addressing recommendations within the behavioral health field. Finally, it named \$150,000 for bringing together stakeholders in life science fields across the state to create a Life Sciences Skill Panel. These initiatives target the needs of a variety of stakeholders, break down silos to foster collaboration, and allocate funds toward high-demand fields, demonstrating the wide range of uses a state may identify for these funds.²⁵

It should be noted that the governor’s set-aside is not a new component of federal workforce

legislation. It also served as a means of leveraging federal resources to meet state needs under WIA. Since its history is longer, state leaders can benefit from surveying the many projects that other states have funded using the set-aside. A 2011 report by the National Governors Association on WIA state set-aside projects offers many examples of the wide variety of uses to which states can direct these funds. The following two examples are drawn from that report and highlight how community colleges can serve as key partners in developing a state’s workforce.²⁶

Again, Washington provides an example of how state set-aside funds can be used effectively. The governor’s office allocated resources from the set-aside in a partnership with other organizations to recruit an assistive products manufacturer, Profile Composites, to the state, which created approximately 200 jobs. It included support to align education and training programs at nearby Olympic College, a public two-year institution, with job demands in the advanced manufacturing positions offered by Profile Composites. Washington allocated \$100,000 of WIA set-aside funds for workforce training, with several local partners (including Olympic College) supporting the streamlining of existing education and training programs with the company’s needs. This sector-based initiative not only brought a new employer (and revenue stream) to the state, but also leveraged the existing capabilities of a nearby community college to connect job-seekers with real employment opportunities.

Massachusetts provides another example of leveraging WIA set-aside funds to improve alignment of education and the workforce. Through a sector partnership focused on healthcare, the state developed the Healthcare Skills Gap Partnership Grants, which seek to increase the pool of qualified workers in healthcare occupations with persistent vacancies. Massachusetts leveraged the WIA state set-aside to bring together stakeholders at the local level to develop shared goals for improving healthcare workforce development and meeting regional skill gaps, conceiving of job training as the mediator between student skills and employer needs. Grantee partnerships drew from the expertise of regional workforce boards, employers, education providers, and other stakeholders to create aligned strategies. Educational institutions were responsible for designing and adjusting healthcare workforce training to prepare students for growing areas of employment in healthcare, as well as considering the needs of students who seek out workforce training. In addition to developing shared strategies to address skill gaps, over 900 workers were trained to enter the workforce through the grant program. In this case, closer collaboration in local workforce development – supported by WIA funds – created clearer pathways to high-need positions in Massachusetts' growing healthcare industry.

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As states consider how best to serve job-seekers entering the state workforce training programs, they may consider leveraging WIOA support to bring employers to the state and align existing education and training with growing job opportunities. These strategies pay close attention to developing a viable job market and equipping program completers with skills to make them successful in the local workforce.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOICES AT THE STATE LEVEL

Through WIOA, the federal government compels each state to align the needs of a variety of stakeholders in its economy with the larger goals of its leaders. This should be a collaborative process, where the shared interests of individuals, businesses and policymakers are defined and partnerships are developed with each state's unique economy in mind. To this end, WIOA requires each state to submit a four-year strategic plan outlining its vision for economic growth and strategies to better connect workers to available jobs. State plans were due to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) in spring 2016, and most states have submitted final plans after receiving feedback from USDOL.²⁷

The State Workforce Development Boards (SWDBs) are responsible for developing the state plan and for overseeing the development of local workforce development plans. States are given considerable latitude on how plans are structured, as long as they “fosters strategic alignment” of WIOA's core programs.²⁸ States can opt to submit a unified plan, which covers all WIOA core programs, or a combined plan, which extends beyond core programs and integrates at least one other federal or state assistance program.²⁹ WIOA requires states

to include guidance on how community colleges and area career and technical education schools will be incorporated as partners.³⁰

Under WIA, SWDBs were required to include a representative from the community college sector. In WIOA, states merely have the option of including a community college representative on the state board, but community college leaders can lend valuable insight into how community colleges can be leveraged in meeting the state's workforce development needs. While community colleges share certain traits, many systems and institutions have unique features with which few outside of the college are familiar. The community college perspective offers other SWDB members an on-the-ground look at how workforce training currently works and how to reach key populations.

The voices of community college leaders can be helpful at the state level, but they can be particularly effective as members of Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). A higher education provider that offers job training programs – such as a community college – is required on LWDBs, which develop local strategic plans, analyze regional

labor markets, convene community stakeholders and regional employers, develop more aligned career pathways, determine ways to increase the accessibility of workforce development programs using technology, and oversee youth development programs, among other activities.³¹ Local boards' proximity to employers and training providers allows them to tailor programs and services to students and job-seekers from the area. Community college trustees can be particularly valuable members of LWDBs, as many have ties to area businesses and experience managing policy within postsecondary institutions. They are therefore uniquely poised to recognize the confluences between educational programs and business interests and able to facilitate integration between two sometimes siloed actors.

Including a community college representative on WDBs offers a way a way to bring special attention to the needs of individuals seeking job training and filling gaps with additional resources.

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CONCLUSION: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

WIOA offers a lens through which to imagine the future of coordination between federal, state and local entities in developing a region's workforce. It allows for the inclusion of a diverse array of stakeholders and provides a platform and resources for collaboration. When state policymakers thoroughly consider and align the needs and skills of job-seekers, the current job training environment, and desired outcomes, meaningful change can occur.

In this paper, we offer four recommendations for ways state policymakers can leverage community colleges within WIOA to improve alignment and collaboration in the state workforce development system:

1. Make community colleges a point of confluence in both sector partnerships and career pathways to provide comprehensive and appropriate resources and training to job-seekers.
2. Develop and adjust workforce training programs to meet employer needs and keep student financial need in mind by providing WIOA-eligible training programs for which students can access one or more forms of financial assistance.
3. Leverage the governor's set-aside to geographically align workforce opportunities, student talent and workforce training programs.

4. Include community college voices on state and local WDBs and in the development and implementation of the state economic plan.

There are opportunities at many levels to coordinate efforts and streamline training pathways that lead to good jobs and economic growth. WIOA allows for postsecondary institutions to be key partners in training job seekers for placement in high-demand fields. The combination of job training experience and programmatic flexibility at community colleges makes them an ideal provider of education for those looking to enter the workforce.

We hope this paper provides a starting point for decision-makers looking to invest in their residents, businesses and institutions to achieve long-term economic prosperity. We also hope it highlights how the federal government can work with states to accomplish national goals. Coordinated, federated strategies account for the best interests of our country while also allowing states and localities to create initiatives that address their unique needs and structures. As WIOA is implemented in the coming months and years, federal policymakers may assess its efficacy and find that it provides a model for future postsecondary education policies that can positively impact our nation's students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources provide additional guidance and nuance on the aspects of WIOA discussed in this paper. We provide links to the statutory and regulatory language of WIOA and highlight organizations and papers whose focus is disseminating information about workforce development programs. We encourage those interested in learning more about effective use of WIOA funds to further explore the work of the organizations who published these papers:

1. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 29 U.S.C. § 3101
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>
2. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, *Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions; Final Rule*
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15977.pdf>
3. U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services. *The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Final Rules: A Detailed Look*
<https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Docs/Final-Rules-A-Detailed-Look-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
4. Brooke DeRenzis and Bryan Wilson, *Skills in the States: Sector Partnership Policy Toolkit*
<http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/Final-Sector-Partnership-Policy-Toolkit-1.pdf>
5. Kisha Bird, Marcie Foster, and Evelyn Ganzglass, *New Opportunities to Improve Economic and Career Success for Low-Income Youth and Adults: Key Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*
<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/KeyProvisionsofWIOA-Final.pdf>
6. National Governors Association, *States' Use of Workforce Investment Act Set-Aside Funding for Statewide Activities*
<http://www.nga.org/cms/home/special/col2-content/states-use-of-workforce-investme.html>



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ENDNOTES

¹ Anthony P. Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020* (Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 2013), https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.FR_Web_.pdf (accessed September 20, 2016).

² “WIOA Overview,” U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, <https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm> (accessed September 20, 2016).

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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Education Commission of the States coordinated the creation and dissemination of a series of policy briefs focused on the interaction between state- and federal level policies pertaining to higher education. The briefs are composed by a diverse collection of education policy and thought leaders representing state and federal perspectives. The goal of this collection of briefs is to highlight how federal and state higher education policies can provide a cohesive policy playbook to support student success and the progression toward meeting aggressive attainment goals.

The brief production process began in late-summer 2016 with authors beginning the writing process. Dissemination of the briefs was provided through informal policy briefings with state and federal audiences through fall 2016 and the public release in December 2016. Topics explored in the briefs include, but are not limited to, financial aid, data policies, funding, the “triad” and workforce needs.

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