

Your Question:

How do states align education, workforce, and economic development goals to create collaborative workforce systems?

Our Response:

States continue to seek ways to align education, workforce and economic goals. An important piece of goal alignment is collaboration, both formal and informal. States have sought ways to codify collaborations to align goals, funding sources and programs to meet the needs of students and adults to access education and training relevant to their lives and careers.

The following information and state examples provide an overview of goal alignment and collaboration in states. The examples provide insight into the different approaches states take on the two topics.

Integrating Attainment and Workforce Development Goals

As states continue to identify educational attainment, workforce and economic development goals, many have sought to create explicit connections across the goals. Some include pathways into the workforce that rely on strong partnerships and a landscape of workforce needs to ensure economic success.

As of 2017, 41 states have established an attainment goal meeting the requirements set out by the [Lumina Foundation](#). Since then, [Michigan](#), [North Carolina](#) and [West Virginia](#) have set goals and developed implementation plans. [North Carolina](#) outlined a path forward through its [myFUTURENC report](#).

There are many different approaches states take to tie attainment goals to workforce needs. Some common methods include:

- [State longitudinal data systems](#): Tracking individual mobility through K-12 education and the workforce to measure progress toward goals and individual outcomes.
- [Strong partnerships](#): Establishing strong connections across agencies through informal or codified partnerships at the state level. In doing so, states have also considered connections with different sectors of the state or regional economies to include a spectrum of perspectives to inform goals and alignment at the state and regional level.
- [Credential pathways](#) and [in-demand occupations](#): Creating pathways for both degree and non-degree credentials and opportunities to align goals and existing education and training initiatives in the state.

State Examples

Both [Colorado](#) and [Oregon](#) aligned attainment goals with workforce needs through large-scale strategic planning.

Colorado: In 2017, the state published [Colorado Rises](#), a strategic plan for postsecondary education in the state. The plan identifies four goals, including increasing credential completion to meet workforce needs. The goal links credentials explicitly within the goal to identify high-demand fields. In particular, the state highlights the need for credentialed individuals in STEM fields.

Oregon: In 2011, the state enacted legislation to establish [ORS 340.014](#), creating the state’s 40-40-20 education goal. Since the initial goal, the state has established and clarified goals.

- The state clarified the goal in 2017 to focus on supporting young Oregonians across the P-20 education system.
- The state established a [new goal](#) in 2018 for education and training for working adults. The 2018 goal aims to increase credential production by 300,000 and reduce attainment gaps in the state. In developing the goal, Oregon identified 120,000 additional jobs that will require postsecondary training/education between 2018 and 2030. By setting this goal, the state intends to align the goal to the [Future Ready Oregon](#) initiative.
- Oregon’s [Workforce and Talent Development Board](#) has the vision of “a strong state economy and prosperous communities are fueled by skilled workers, quality jobs, and thriving businesses.” The vision is used to guide and align the pursuit of their education and training goals.

[Creating Cross-Agency Partnerships and Collaboration](#)

States have taken different approaches to form partnerships and collaborations to advance workforce development education and training. In a 2018 [report](#), ECS found that education and workforce policymakers expressed the importance of forming and formalizing partnerships across education and workforce systems but raised concerns about the fragility of informal collaborations.

Each state has existing workforce development boards and statewide workforce and postsecondary education systems that establish, support and provide programs for individuals to access education and training. However, states have continued to seek ways to codify and formalize partnerships and collaborations that support their ability to make connections across education, workforce and economic development systems to ensure individual and workforce needs are being met. States have generally formed collaboration and partnerships in the following areas:

1. Expanding the membership of workforce-related boards.
2. Forming and providing support to task forces or commissions to develop recommendations and programs.
3. Required formal collaboration across agencies to align goals, funding sources and [initiatives](#).

State Examples

The following are examples of state legislation enacted over the past couple of years. The examples were selected to demonstrate the different legislative approaches states have taken to establish and foster relationships across education and workforce systems.

Membership of Workforce-Related Boards

California: In 2021, the state enacted [legislation](#) that expands the membership of the [Interagency Committee on Apprenticeships](#) by adding the director of the department of social services as an ex officio member. The bill requires the committee to create a subcommittee to study and report on issues related to the participation of youth experiencing homelessness and youth in foster care in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.

Taskforces and Commissions

Illinois: In 2021, the state enacted [legislation](#) that created the Illinois Future of Work Task Force. The bill provides for the duties and responsibilities of the task force and requires the department of commerce and economic opportunity to provide administrative support to the task force. Finally, it requires the task force to submit a final report to the governor and the General Assembly no later than May 1, 2022.

Pennsylvania: In 2021, the state enacted [legislation](#) that establishes the 2030 Commission on Education and Economic Competitiveness and outlines membership and leadership. The bill requires that the commission consults with the subcommittee on education planning to advise on the long-term education goals of the commonwealth. It requires the subcommittee on education planning to issue a report with legislative recommendations to the commission, including recommendations on parent and community participation and changing demographics in the education system. The commission is charged with seeking public comment on a long-term vision and issuing a final report to the General Assembly within 18 months of its creation.

Cross-Agency Collaboration and Goal Alignment

Texas: The state formed the [Tri-Agency](#) through an executive order in March 2016. The governor tasked the Commissioners of the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission to work together on changes centered on developing strong links between education, industry and the goal of helping Texas grow its economy. In 2019, the state Legislature passed [House Bill 3](#), which addresses school finance. Following the passage of the legislation, the governor tasked the Tri-Agency with streamlining implementation of House Bill 3 and identifying long-term solutions to workforce needs in the state.

In 2021, the state enacted a series of bills to codify the Tri-Agency initiatives and shift some of the responsibilities of participating agencies to the industry-based certification council and workforce commission.

- [HB 3767](#): Establishes the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to ensure the following:
 - Use state and federal education and workforce funds efficiently.
 - Align career education and training programs to workforce demands.
 - Enable local and state policymakers to identify workforce outcomes of participants and progress toward state workforce development goals.

The legislation requires a series of actions and collaborations among the agencies to accomplish these intentions.

- The legislation requires that the state education agency, higher education coordinating board and workforce commission enter into one or more interagency agreements to establish policies and procedures for sharing and matching data and coordinating the assignment of existing staff and resources to advance the state workforce development goals.
 - The higher education coordinating board is required to develop a strategic plan to operate a unified repository of education and workforce data.
 - The commissioner of education, higher education and chair of the workforce commission must jointly develop and post state workforce development goals and coordinate interagency strategies to achieve the goals.
 - The higher education coordinating board and the workforce commission must establish a publicly accessible web-based library of credentials such as diplomas, certificates, certifications, digital badges, apprenticeships, licenses or degrees. The state education agency and the higher education coordinating board must use federal funds to report student success in career education and training programs offered by schools and institutions. Success is measured in various ways, including degree or credential completion, employment status, industry of employment and earnings over time.
- [HB 1247](#): Requires the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Education Agency to develop a strategic framework to encourage work-based learning. The Tri-Agency must provide a report on the framework by Dec. 31, 2022. The legislation details requirements, including defining work-based learning and other standard terms and identifying strategic partners across sectors.

- [HB 3938](#): Establishes an industry-based certification advisory council to advise the Texas Workforce Commission on aligning public high school CTE programs with current and future workforce needs. The legislation transfers specific duties currently carried out by the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to the council. The council will receive administrative and staff support from the Texas Workforce Commission.