



THE COUNCIL OF  
STATE GOVERNMENTS



# CSG'S STATE PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

## A FRAMEWORK FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS

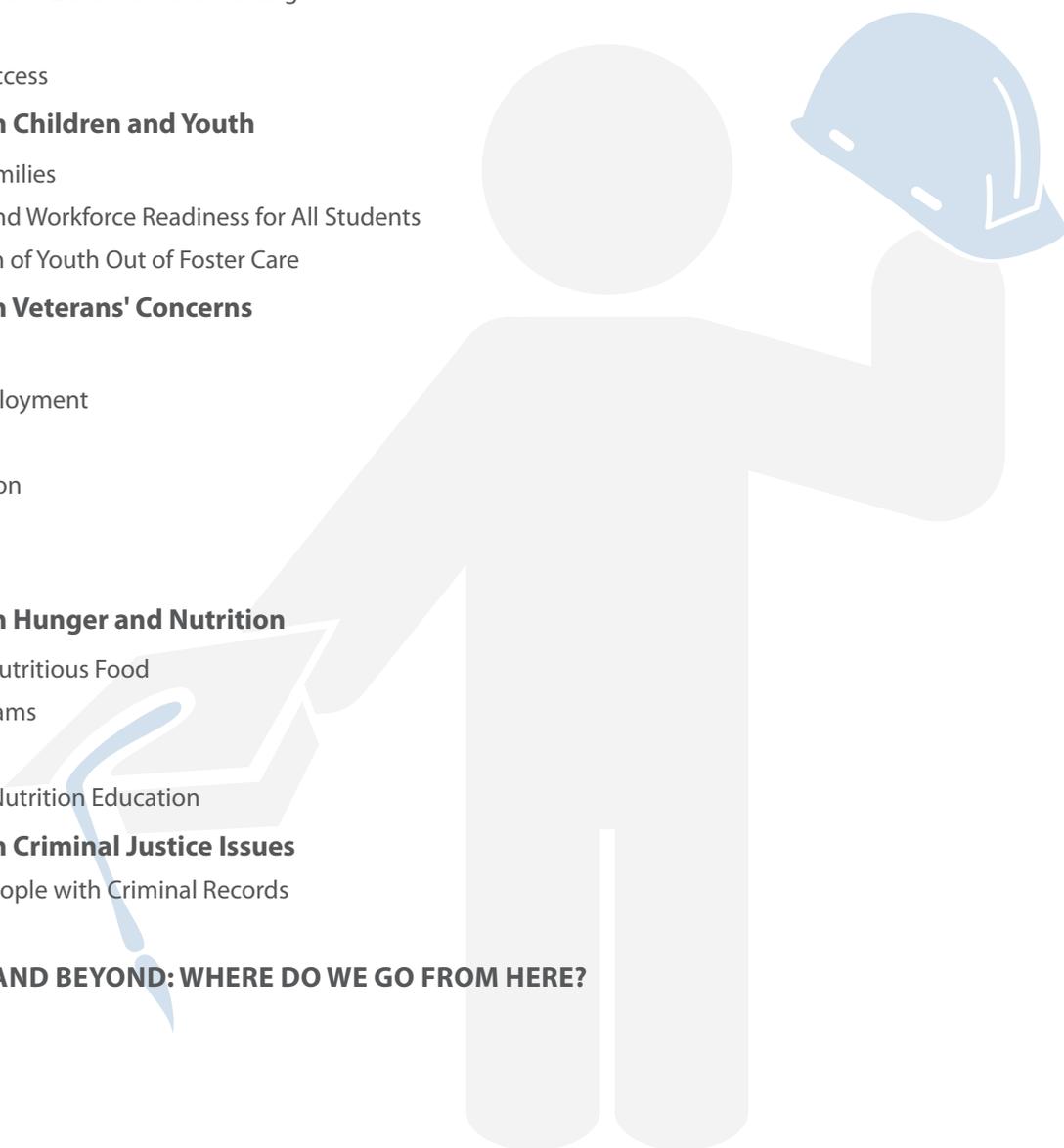
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Developing Pathways to Ensure a  
Skilled Workforce for State Prosperity

August 2015

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ▶

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## BUILDING STRONGER STATES ► CSG LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Today in the U.S., there are nearly 5.2 million job openings and 8.3 million unemployed. These simple numbers represent the challenge of aligning jobs with workers who possess the skills to succeed. It was this very challenge that inspired The Council of State Governments to launch an initiative designed to identify obstacles—and alternative pathways—to prosperity for many Americans. State leaders are keenly interested in growing state economies and they have consistently heard from businesses large and small that one of the greatest impediments to business expansion is the lack of an adequately trained workforce.

Delaware’s Gov. Jack Markell, the 2013 Chair of the National Governors Association said in his state-of-the-state address this year, “Workers produce nearly twice as many goods and services as they did 25 years ago, but middle class incomes haven’t grown. In fact, they’ve shrunk. Jobs that once guaranteed a stable career are now outsourced to other countries or handled by new technology. There has never been a better time to be somebody with the right skills, but never a worse time to be somebody without the right skills. These are not passing trends; this is the struggle of our time.” For too many American families that struggle is all too real.

As Markell reminds us, “By 2025, at least 65 percent of our jobs will require training beyond high school, but only 40 percent of our workers have that today.”

Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, during his service as CSG’s 2014 national chair, committed CSG to an unprecedented initiative to help find ways to grow state economies and address workforce challenges. His vision transcended state boundaries and political ideology and became a robust rallying point for state leaders from throughout America. CSG’s State Pathways to Prosperity initiative builds on Chair Norris’ personal experience, which has helped shape recent innovations in Tennessee, one of the nation’s leaders in workforce development and education reforms.

The initiative provides a policy and practice framework for states to better address workforce needs and strategies for states to equip citizens with the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed for the 21st century global economy.

The initiative, under Norris’ leadership, was driven by a national task force and four subcommittees focusing on child poverty, hunger and nutrition, criminal justice issues, and military and veterans’ concerns. This report contains the work product of the subcommittees and task force, representing more than a year of study, dialogue and deliberation by state officials from both parties, all regions of the U.S. and from diverse perspectives. The result is a report of significant breadth that represents the consensus of CSG members who dedicated considerable time to crafting these options for states to consider.

Chair Norris knew what may not seem obvious to the casual observer—that **child poverty, criminal justice issues, hunger and nutrition, and military and veterans’ concerns** present an array of obstacles to matching

people with 21st century jobs. He connected the dots and provided CSG with a roadmap, challenging CSG to address some of the most entrenched barriers to achieving the American Dream. Because of this unique perspective, this report does more than amplify the good work being done by many in this field; it breaks new ground and for the first time provides a comprehensive approach to understanding and reducing obstacles to achieving prosperity.

Chair Norris also shared his passion for these issues with federal officials at the highest levels of government and he committed CSG to advocate on behalf of the states in a successful effort to reauthorize the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act, which was signed into law in July 2014.

CSG provides leadership to the states on strategies to provide offenders who have completed their confinement the opportunity to successfully reintegrate into the community. During the course of a White House briefing convened by CSG, major employers such as Johns Hopkins Hospital, Home Depot and FedEx, among others, talked about their success in employing ex-offenders. Too often, state policies conspire to create obstacles for successful reentry while providing no discernable benefit to public safety. More enlightened strategies are available. Many states now realize they can reduce recidivism and the costs associated with it by strategically equipping offenders with the skills necessary to find a job and become a contributing member of society. CSG's Justice Center serves as a national resource on effective reentry strategies.

The 2015 CSG national chair, New York state Sen. Carl Marcellino, served as a public school educator and now chairs the New York State Senate's Education Committee. He sees value in keeping workforce development as a key leadership priority for CSG during his year as chair, and he believes CSG has a vital role to play in providing state leaders with information and insights on how best to address workforce issues and grow state economies. Chair Marcellino is committed to deepening CSG's footprint in the workforce development arena and has challenged CSG not to allow this report to gather dust. He believes this report is just a first step and has urged CSG to continue to develop and share strategies capable of getting and keeping states on pathways to prosperity.

CSG encourages your feedback on the contents of this report and your help in learning even more about the success stories in your state. Please contact us and let us know your thoughts. We know CSG and other state leaders can benefit from your perspective.

With this report, CSG plays an impactful role in providing states and their leaders with the knowledge needed to achieve greater economic vitality and place many more Americans on a path to success in the global economy.

I commend all of the many leaders and experts whose work is reflected in the contents of this report. I am also proud of all that the states have achieved in the past few years—much of which is shared in this report—to grow their economies and position our nation for success in the global economy. While most would agree there is much left to be done, it is also true that there is much progress to celebrate thanks to the leadership of our nation's governors and legislators. I commend the leadership of CSG National Chairs Norris and Marcellino, whose vision and passion for making a difference have helped CSG do just that.

I hope you will put CSG to work for you.



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**MARK NORRIS**

Tennessee Senate Majority Leader,  
2014 CSG National Chair

## FOREWORD ►

### Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, 2014 CSG National Chair

Workforce development and relevant education present, at once, some of the greatest challenges—as well as opportunities—of our time. We all want to see the kind of improvement in quality of life that flows from a skilled workforce gainfully employed in our states.

State Pathways to Prosperity is The Council of State Governments' workforce development and education initiative designed to facilitate that objective.

This report reflects CSG's continuing role in the effort underway across the United States to build a ready workforce equipped with a relevant education to embrace the advanced manufacturing opportunities now returning to our shores. In short, this report and its recommendations demonstrates CSG's commitment to be an active participant in the nationwide effort to close the "skills gap" standing between too many of our citizens and opportunities for meaningful employment.

We explore in this work some components that aren't always considered when states look at economic development: military and veterans' issues, criminal justice, hunger and nutrition, and children and youth.

It's important to do so because life happens and, sometimes, it interferes. Hunger, for example, subtly but insidiously intervenes. Hungry children don't learn as well; hungry parents don't perform well.

Nonviolent ex-offenders represent a ready workforce amounting to hundreds of thousands who could relatively quickly join or re-enter the workforce but for their infraction.

Veterans are often the most highly-skilled and trained workforce we have. But for the lack of a conventional certificate or degree, these individuals could readily assume responsibility for many of the opportunities afforded by the emerging economy.

Each of these issues presents special challenges—and sometimes opportunities—to educators, guidance counselors, recruiters, developers and human resource professionals. They are integral to the kind of comprehensive approach that must be taken in order to successfully develop our workforce to meet the demands of our evolving economy.

What follows is CSG's effort to "connect the dots," many of which are often lost for lack of sufficient interaction between state agencies and departments, on one hand, and the private sector on the other.

There is much to be said for the success that comes from leveraging existing resources, and we hope this report contributes to that endeavor in a meaningful way.

“In today’s fast moving world, talent is the only sustainable competitive advantage.”

» Klaus Kleinfeld, CEO, Alcoa Inc

## CHARGE TO STATE POLICY MAKERS ►

### Meeting the Needs of Today's Workforce

In 2013, national leaders of The Council of State Governments set the vision for education in “A Framework for State Policymakers: Ensure All Students are College- and Career-Ready” to make certain states are actively engaged in preparing students for college, careers and life. That framework recommended robust state-level policies to support a set of competencies that are invaluable for success, both in postsecondary education and in the workforce. These competencies go beyond the acquisition and mastery of content knowledge and, in fact, align with many of the workplace soft skills that so many employers feel their employees’ lack—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, self-direction and an academic mindset. The framework remains timely, given the proportion of recent high school graduates *attending* college is far higher than the proportion of 12th graders who are *prepared* for college. Fortunately, education reform has shifted to focus on key competencies, particularly as they pertain to life and career skills, however it is critical to ensure that students can successfully attain some form of postsecondary education to meet the workforce demands.

In 2014, as part of the State Pathways to Prosperity initiative led by CSG President West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Chairman Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, CSG created the National Task Force on Workforce Development and Education. The task force has assembled a set of policy recommendations building on the college- and career-readiness framework to provide direction to states in how to address some of the major barriers to prosperity for a vast number of Americans.

State policy leaders must work with businesses to examine statewide, as well as regional, workforce needs based on data with measurable outcomes and strategically invest state funds to prepare individuals for these opportunities as an economic growth strategy. State leaders can set expectations and lay out a vision for individuals living in their state to be on an education or training pathway that will provide them with access to vacancies available in more skilled, better-paying jobs. This means that state policymakers must partner with workforce investment boards, veterans’ groups, local school districts, community colleges and nonprofit organizations statewide.

States will need to develop policies that take into account important equity considerations, given that vulnerable groups and minorities face disproportionate challenges to achieving higher wages. These policies may extend beyond providing meaningful education and career pathways—where skills relevant for the working world are taught at school—but also may include expanding access to services focused on health and nutrition;

building basic skills early on by broadening and improving the quality of early childhood education; and being proactive in reintegrating veterans into the workforce by leveraging their military experience and providing personalized learning opportunities to further develop their skills.

It is the hope of CSG that this framework is seen as a companion document that will provide technical assistance to elected and appointed officials focused on policies and programs to ensure an effective cradle-to-career pathway, encompassing strategies that focus on early learning opportunities through to gainful employment, with a special emphasis on veterans, children and youth, those living with food insecurity and nutritional deficiencies, and adults with criminal backgrounds.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ►

In the shadow of the Great Recession, most states now are seeing evidence of economic growth with increased job creation and overall declines in unemployment. Despite this, too many individuals remain unemployed, the skills gap dividing workers’ technical skills and those capabilities needed by business and industry continues to grow, and many employees still experience the lack of opportunities to advance. Training workers with the skills and competencies needed to sustain employment will help provide for their families and will assist American businesses grow in the economy.

Experts agree the United States will not have enough adequately trained workers for future jobs without efforts at the federal, state and local levels to increase entry into postsecondary education, provide community-based training of adults and increase implementation of job-driven training strategies. A recent prediction estimated a loss of \$1.7 trillion in the U.S. economy by 2030 if improvements are not made in postsecondary education to bridge the skills gap.

Less than 40 years ago, nearly 75 percent of the jobs in the United States could be filled by workers with no more than a high school diploma. Manufacturing, farming and construction jobs, among many others, typically required no formal education beyond 12th grade. As technology has advanced and critical problem-solving skills have become inextricably linked with most occupations, however, the level of education required for jobs that were once classified as ‘unskilled,’ also has risen.

In a 2015 survey by the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte, 82 percent of respondents reported the skills gap will negatively impact their ability to meet customer demand, and 78 percent say the gap will reduce their capacity to implement new technologies and increase productivity. According to the survey results, 600,000

manufacturing jobs are unfilled on any given day due to a lack of qualified candidates. A 2014 McKinsey survey of more than 2,800 employers worldwide showed 4 out of every 10 respondents said they could not fill entry-level positions due to a lack of skills in applicants. More than one-third of respondents reported that their businesses are suffering economically because of a lack of appropriate skills in the labor market

States can play a key role in workforce development by investing in a range of evidence-based strategies—from support for public infrastructure and technological innovation, to the availability of high-quality education and training systems for workers.

Research consistently has demonstrated a significant economic payoff for individuals with high-level job skills, as well as a benefit to the overall economy of a state. There is a strong correlation

between higher levels of education attainment and higher median wages. And when individuals' wages grow, a virtual cycle of growth and prosperity is ignited for the overall state economy, with a solid base of working people who pay taxes and can afford to buy goods and services, thereby supporting the economy.

But attaining higher levels of education goes beyond economic returns; it also corresponds to improved health, lower mortality rates and lower crime rates. Higher levels of education for parents help ensure their children are less likely to grow up in poverty and become poor as adults. It also is positively associated with children's health, cognitive abilities and academic achievement.

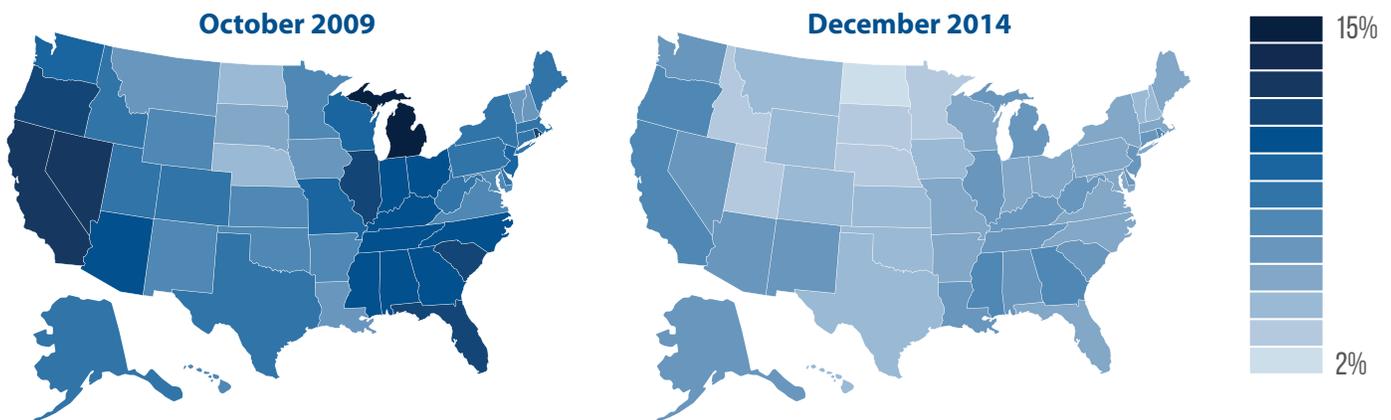
The benefits of a more educated population accrue not only to the workers, but also to future generations and to the broader economy. This suggests that one of the most important

# PAVING THE WAY FOR JOBS CREATION

The post-recession economic recovery has been slow and painful, but states are finally starting to see some real progress as the national unemployment rate falls below 6 percent for the first time in six years. Now that the worst of the economic crisis has abated, state leaders in 2015 will be looking for ways to encourage job creation that does more than just move the statistical needle.

## STATE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES: THEN AND NOW

» The Bureau of Labor Statistics



### Shifting Focus: Quality, Not Just Quantity

So far, the recovery has seen a lot of job growth in low-income sectors while jobs in higher paying sectors that propel the economy forward have been more elusive.

» The U.S. Conference of Mayors

Average annual wage for jobs lost in recession

**\$61,637**

**\$47,171**

Average annual wage for jobs added

THAT'S A 23%  
DROP, EQUAL TO  
**\$93 BILLION**  
IN LOST WAGES

investments state leaders can make is to expand access to high-quality education and related support to develop individuals' workforce skills and improve their educational attainment.

And yet, a 2013 study of adult basic skills conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, shows that not only do lower-skilled workers make up a significant part of the U.S. adult labor force, but low basic skills also are more common in the United States than in other countries. Hispanics and blacks are more likely to have low skill levels than whites and the majority have low basic skills in literacy and numeracy. At the same time, these are the same groups that are most often underserved by education and training programs in basic foundational skills, including those with limited English skills, disabilities or chronic health issues, and/or are re-entering society from incarceration.

A high number of low-skilled youth and adults who are not participating in education and training programs to improve their skills express a desire to do so, according to the OECD study. For those who are participating in education and training, more than one-third say they want to do more. State policymakers need to engage in concerted action to address the low skills of so many youth and adults as part of a larger economic growth strategy.

## The Skills Gap

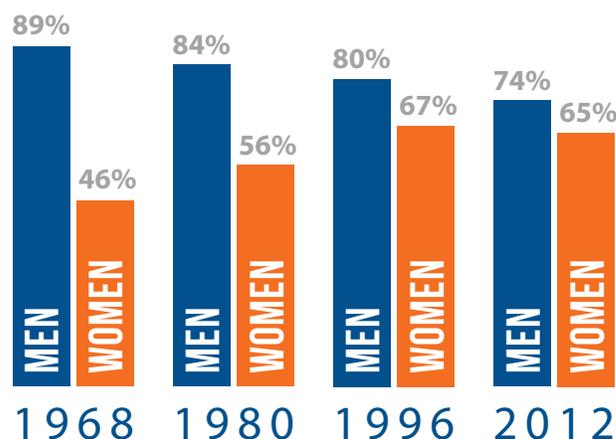
States need to invest in strategies that address not only basic skill development, but also in strategies that will “upskill”—improve their capabilities and competencies—to help them move into what has been called the “middle-skill” job category.

Middle-skill jobs require more than a high school degree but less than a four-year degree. A 2014 report by the National Skills Coalition said middle-skill jobs account for 54 percent of the United States' labor market, but only 44 percent of the country's workers are qualified for the middle-skill level jobs.

It is anticipated that the demand for this category of jobs will remain robust, particularly as the baby boomer generation of workers retires. But as a nation we cannot meet this demand. Furthermore, most reports show a decline in the number of jobs that are—and will be—available in low-skilled occupations. State policymakers must address, if not solve, the skills gap while simultaneously addressing issues of unemployment in low-skill occupations and the number of individuals earning low wages.

Manufacturing, which has transformed from assembly lines that required workers with basic skills to technological centers that require more highly skilled employees, represents one segment of the economy that has impacted the growth of the skills gap. Manufacturing employees need to know how to use computer-numeric-controls and operate lasers and robotics, necessitating computer literacy, math, advanced reading and reasoning skills. For example, in a Ford plant in Louisville, Ky., industrial robots perform the task of applying adhesive that holds the windshield on a vehicle. Other robots equipped with suction cups place the windshield into the vehicle's frame. The task of applying adhesive and inserting windshields used to be done by auto factory workers. This is just one example of how technology has given

# EMPLOYMENT OF MEN AND WOMEN, 1968–2014



» Brad Hershbein & Melissa S. Kearney, The Hamilton Project's Jobs Gap Analysis: A Historical Perspective, March 2015, based on authors' calculations using 1968–2014 Current Population Survey, March Supplement, National Bureau of Economic Research.

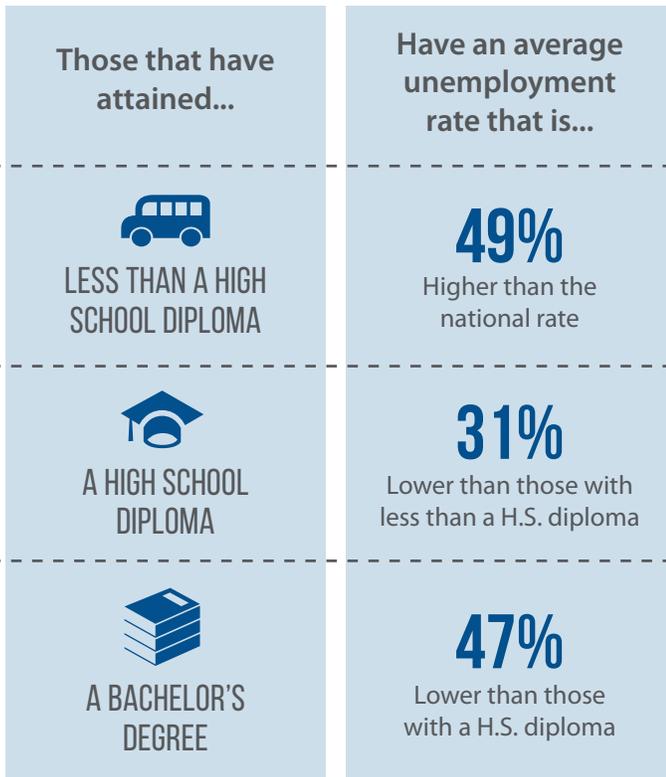
manufacturing a makeover—taking production worlds away from the repetitive tasks previously required for assembly line workers, and requiring the workers to acquire higher-level technological skills to work with robotics thus benefiting those with middle skills.

Technology has equally affected service workers who once were engaged in semi-skilled physical labor. Service technicians for companies like Verizon once primarily were engaged in servicing phone lines, climbing poles, and fixing and deploying copper wire. Now, these workers not only run cable, but they also set up multimedia home technology-based platforms. Think about any service function you need, such as an auto or home repair, and someone is using a technology-based diagnostic system to assess and solve the consumer's problem.

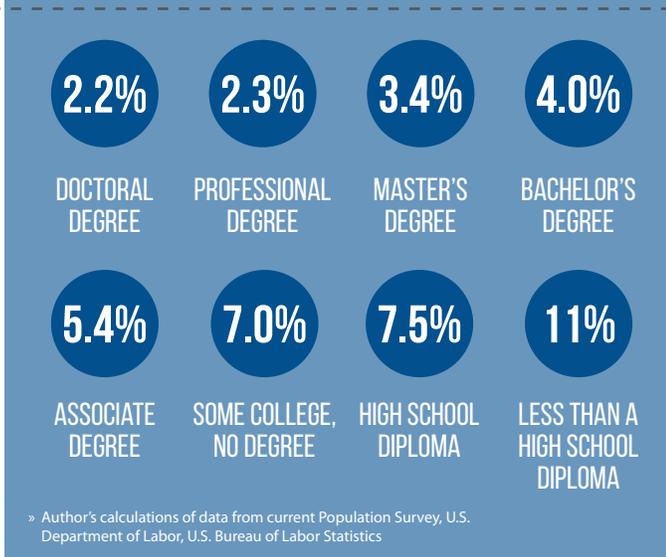
The shift and reliance on technology by business for production and services certainly requires workers to have a new set of technical skills. But the evolution and use of technology also requires that workers have increased general skills, sometimes referred to as “soft skills” or workplace competencies: effective communication, general problem-solving skills, collaboration and general positive behavioral skills. In manufacturing—where technology can take on more of the rote, manual tasks—employees still must be able to interact with each other to address issues of productivity, quality, customization, convenience and innovation. Or take the Verizon service worker—not only is this individual setting up a multimedia technology-based home platform, but the worker is also interacting with consumers. They now serve at the frontlines of customer service using effective communication and problem solving skills.

# EDUCATION PAYS

HIGHER EDUCATION = LOWER UNEMPLOYMENT



## Unemployment Rate in 2013 (%) by Level of Educational Attainment



Industries such as business services, education, health care, community services, STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—and office service jobs require higher levels of interpersonal and problem-solving skills because the work entails higher levels of human interaction and personalized responses to people's wants and needs. Findings from a 2014 job outlook survey by the National Association of College and Employers emphasize the value and importance of general employability skills—such as professionalism, communication, collaboration and critical thinking—for the workplace. And yet, according to the 2012 Talent Shortage Survey from ManpowerGroup, almost 20 percent of employers worldwide cannot fill positions because they can't find people with the appropriate soft skills.

Addressing the skills gap will benefit individuals and their families, as well as a state's economic growth. Having a supply of middle-skills workers helps states maintain their economic competitiveness by ensuring that jobs are filled and productivity remains strong. On an individual level, middle-skills jobs provide sustaining wages to support families so they are healthy and can pursue their own educational goals. Addressing the skills gap also minimizes disparities along the income continuum, contributing to income equality within states.

## The Role of Postsecondary Education

If the workforce of the 21st century requires new forms of academic, vocational and technical skills, along with other workplace competencies, such as communication, general problem-solving skills, team work and positive behavioral skills, then state policymakers have to figure out how to prepare people to fill those well-paid, middle-skills jobs. If companies cannot fill these positions, they will not be able to operate at their full potential. And when key industries aren't operating at peak potential, the state's economy suffers from the loss of sales revenues, the reduction in local supply-chain purchases and opportunities for industries to expand output, market share and taxes. The bottom line is that the prevalence of a skills gap in a state will have continuous consequences for individuals, employers, local industries and the state economy.

Effectively addressing the skills gap will require a comprehensive and coordinated long-term strategy, one involving public-private partnerships among governments, educational institutions, employers and unions to continuously develop and improve individuals' skills. A significant part of the success of this long-term strategy will require bringing the education sector and the working world closer together.

According to the Center on Education and Workforce at the Georgetown Policy Institute, 65 percent of all jobs in the economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school by 2020, 35 percent will require at least a bachelor's degree, and 30 percent will require some college or an associate's degree.

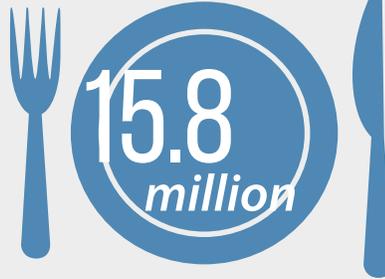
Since the 1980s, the median earnings for those with more postsecondary education increased—that is, those workers with higher postsecondary education attainment levels do better

# CONNECTING THE DOTS

Childhood Hunger Today Hurts the Workforce of Tomorrow

## HUNGER TODAY

Food insecurity—the lack of consistent access to adequate food—affects millions of children and adults every year in the U.S.



Almost 15 percent of households in 2013 were food insecure—that's 49.1 million Americans, including 15.8 million children.

» U.S. Department of Agriculture

## RISK FACTORS

The problems created by hunger follow children to school and lead to negative outcomes.

Food insecure children are:

**2.0 X** More likely to be suspended

**1.4 X** More likely to have to repeat a grade

**1.6 X** More likely to miss days of school

» Center for American Progress

## DROPOUTS INCREASE

Absenteeism and school disciplinary problems are associated with lower academic achievement and greatly increase the chances a child will drop out of school.

The Georgia Dept. of Education found there was up to a 50 percentage point difference in dropout rates between those missing up to 5 days of school and those who were absent 15 days or more.

» Johns Hopkins University

**\$292K**

The average dropout cost taxpayers \$292,000 over a lifetime.

» Northeastern University

**63X**

For dropouts ages 16–24, incarceration rates were 63 times higher than for college graduates.

» U.S. Census Bureau

## BIG PRICE TAG

Kids who drop out of high school make less money over their lifetime, have higher rates of unemployment, contribute less to the tax base and are more likely to be incarcerated.

## THE COST OF HUNGER

Researchers at the Center for American Progress estimate that hunger costs the U.S. at least \$167.5 billion every year based on a combination of lost economic productivity, increased education expenses, avoidable health care costs and the cost of charity.

### THE HUNGER BILL

**\$167.5**  
*billion*

**\$542**  
*per capita*

This “hunger bill” cost every citizen \$542 in 2010. On a state-by-state basis, the per capita hunger bill ranged from a low of \$341 in North Dakota and \$390 in Virginia to a high of \$695 in Arkansas and \$704 in Mississippi.

» Hunger in America, Center for American Progress, October 2011

relative to those with no postsecondary education or those with less postsecondary education. Postsecondary education serves as the bridge to middle-skill jobs in the 21st century, just like a high school degree did during the industrial era.

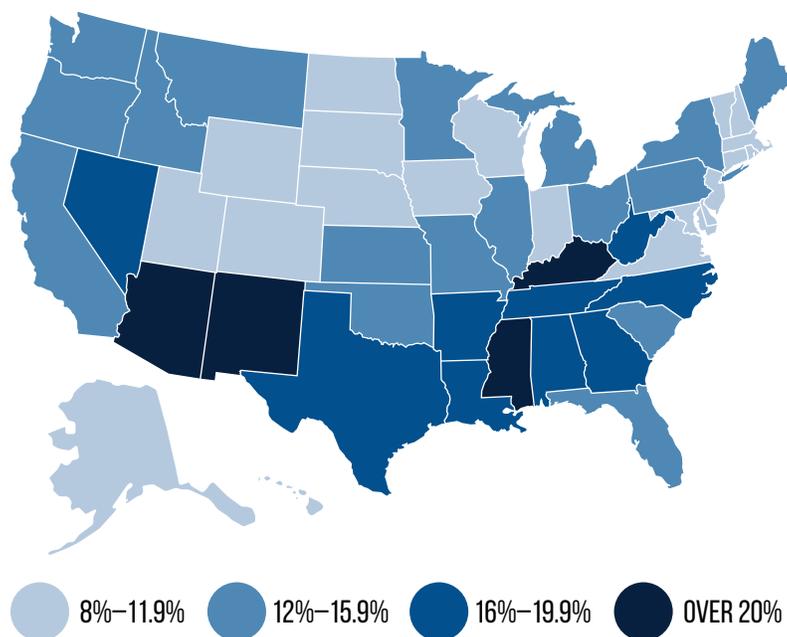
With postsecondary credentials as the gateway to middle-skill jobs, the challenge lies in the disparity between the levels of educational attainment among U.S. minority groups and the white population, which is compounded by significant shifts in the labor force. An increasing number of Latinos and African Americans will be entering the labor force at the same time the predominantly white baby boomer generation will be retiring.

The future success of the middle class and economic growth mandates that states must find ways to increase access to some form of postsecondary education for its citizens. The imperative is amplified given current demographic shifts—both an increasingly diverse population and the impending retirement of the mostly white baby boom generation. Expanding the availability of postsecondary opportunities that will lead to high-demand, middle-skill jobs will require state leaders to develop an integrated, long-term vision that connects education with workforce needs.

# POVERTY RATES IN 2013

## State-by-State

The national poverty rate fell from 15 percent in 2012 to 14.5 percent in 2013—the first time the rate has fallen in eight years. The poverty rate for children under 18 also declined in 2013 for the first time since 2000—from 21.8 percent in 2012 to 19.9 percent in 2013. Poverty rates among states range from lows of 8.3 percent in Utah, 8.7 percent in Vermont and 9 percent in New Hampshire to highs of 20 percent in Arizona, 21.7 percent in New Mexico and 22.5 percent in Mississippi.



# EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS 2014

## TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS

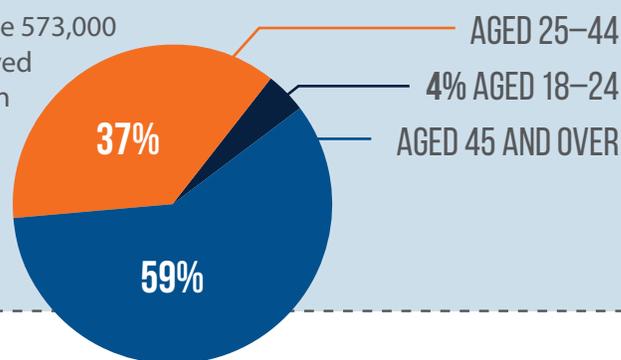
In 2014, 21.2 million men and women, representing 9 percent of the civilian non-institutional population age 18 and over were veterans.

Unemployment rate for veterans in 2014:

**5.2%** MALE VETERANS

**6.0%** FEMALE VETERANS

Among the 573,000 unemployed veterans in 2014



In 2014, the unemployment rate of veterans varied by state, ranging from

**1.4%** in North Dakota to

**8.5%** in Maryland.

» U.S. Department of Labor. "Employment Situation of Veterans." March 18, 2015. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.toc.htm>



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ▶

The Council of State Governments' National Task Force on Workforce Development and Education reviewed the major barriers to prosperity for a vast number of Americans and, through the State Pathways to Prosperity initiative, addressed the lack of opportunities to engage students in the learning process. Members identified the need for better coordination of education pedagogy and instructional methodologies so all students are college- and career-ready and we, as a nation, are better able to close the skills gap. Issues impacting children and youth, hunger and nutrition impediments, veterans' concerns, and ex-offenders exacerbate these challenges.

Understanding that corporate expectations may not always align with K-12 and postsecondary education's academic standards, and that the United States therefore is not producing graduates with the necessary competencies for the labor market, the task force and subcommittee members developed policy and practice recommendations to ensure vacant jobs are filled with the most highly qualified workers to meet the demands of business and industry.



# NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION ▶

## K-12/POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION/ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ALIGNMENT

Options for states to consider:

- Encourage all entities to think of education from cradle-to-career and embed the concept in their directives.
- Provide opportunities for attainment of stackable credentials, flexibility of licensure, credit for prior learning and competency-based education.
- Encourage policies where students progress by demonstrating competency, which may include allowing students to test out for prior knowledge.
- Facilitate the conversation between education and business to develop action plans with defined results for aligning K-12, postsecondary education, workforce development and the business community.
- Ensure industry provides expertise/direction to K-12 education leaders related to the development of curriculum and to postsecondary officials on the recruitment and training of teachers for the classroom.
- Develop partnerships with industry to engage in development of technical education programs, curriculum and assessments.
- Increase opportunities for work-based learning and provide credit for job training and experiential learning opportunities.
- Support policies that allow new models of teaching that incorporate business representatives and their expertise in the classroom, including incentives to meet the need of integrating industry-based competencies into classroom instruction.
- Ensure courses meet industry-aligned standards through industry-recognized certifications where available, and award certificates at the end of class or program of study when possible.
- Provide opportunities for teacher externships and partnering for business-educator staff swaps.

## State Snapshots

### Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program: Collaboration among Education and Industry

Tennessee's Labor Education Alignment Program, or LEAP, was developed to reduce or eliminate skills gaps through collaborative partnerships between education and industry. The program is built on data collection and analysis driven by regional workforce data to identify then bridge skills gaps in the state.

LEAP also created a Skills Gap Grant competition to provide \$10 million in state funds as a companion program to Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 initiatives to get 55 percent of state citizens graduating with a college degree or certificate by 2025. New programs will be built around existing, successful models such as Nashville's Skills Panel, a public-private partnership focused on increasing worker skills in information technology, health care and advanced manufacturing, and the Tennessee State Department of Education-led Pathways to Prosperity Network, a consortium of states that address the skills gaps of young Americans.

Local groups assist with skills gaps forecasts, identify priorities for the area, create training programs or education needed to reduce the gaps, and then request funding to implement the programs. Tennessee also created a new position, state director of workforce alignment, within Gov. Haslam's cabinet to partner with the departments of education, economic and community development, labor and workforce development, along with the state board of regents and higher education commission to select and support grantees.

### Alabama Workforce Council Supports Education

Designed to help K-12 and postsecondary education institutions in the state better meet the needs of business and industry, Gov. Robert Bentley created the Alabama Workforce Council, comprised primarily of state business leaders. Alabama has made considerable investments in its career and technical education in recent years, including a \$50 million bond issue for new equipment, a commitment to include \$5 million in the budget annually to maintain and update equipment at the schools and a 50 percent tax credit for businesses investing in a scholarship fund to support dual enrollment. The scholarship money is expected to help about 10,000 students enroll in community college programs while still in high school.

## Apprenticeship Carolina

In 2001, a partnership between the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce and the SC Technical College System created Apprenticeship Carolina. Based on results from an in-state analysis of gaps between worker skills and workforce needs, the group sought to broaden the approach to education beyond the typical classroom, viewing instruction as the precursor to an occupation. With a \$1 million award from the state legislature, the group opened its doors in 2007 and has the fastest growing use of apprenticeships in the nation, providing services such as offering market apprenticeships, identifying core job competencies and coordinating curricula with colleges at no cost to employers.

## New Hampshire Competency-based Approach

In 2005, New Hampshire passed Minimum Standards for School Approval, eliminating the credit hour and moving the state's K-12 system toward a complete competency-based education approach. Students progress through grades and graduate from high school based on their demonstration of competency through multiple assessments rather than hours spent in a classroom.

Part of the implementation strategy is the Extended Learning Opportunity initiative, which allows students to earn credit toward graduation through experiences that occur outside the classroom. The state defines extended learning as, "the primary acquisition of knowledge and skills through instruction or study outside of the traditional classroom methodology, including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, community service, independent study, online courses, internships, performing groups and private instruction."

## Maine's Demonstration of Proficiency

In 2012, the Maine Legislature passed into law Legislative Document 1422, An Act to Prepare Maine People for the Future Economy, which established a new proficiency-based diploma. The law requires all students to demonstrate proficiency by meeting state standards in English, math, science, social studies, health/physical education, Career Technical Education, world language, and visual and performing arts, rather than completing a specific number of courses in each subject. While the new diploma initially was set to go into effect in the 2015–16 school year, local school districts have been able to receive waivers to extend that timeline. There are some early adopting schools, and the Maine Department of Education has released a number of case studies and a synthesis report on early lessons learned.

## Flexible Pathways in Vermont

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin in June 2013 signed into law Act 77, a bill creating a Flexible Pathways Initiative within the state education department to expand opportunities for secondary students to complete high school and achieve postsecondary readiness. The act provides the opportunity for each high school student to enroll in two dual enrollment courses at no expense to the student and authorizes the development of additional early college programs through which students can complete 12th grade entirely on a college campus. It also requires career exploration and the development of personal learning plans for all students beginning in seventh grade.

# VARIANCE OF INTERNSHIP WAGES



**\$20.18** per hour | Highest internship pay rates  
Undergraduate engineering students

**\$17.02** per hour | Lowest internship pay rates  
Undergraduate liberal arts students

» National Association of Colleges and Employers, "Internship and Co-Op Survey Report," 2014

In December 2013, Vermont's State Board of Education adopted new Education Quality Standards, which moved the state to a fully competency-based system. The standards require schools to provide students the "opportunity to experience learning through flexible and multiple pathways, including but not limited to career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college." All districts are required to develop a local assessment system, aligned to state standards that measure students' proficiency using a balance of assessment types, such as portfolio, projects and teacher-designed assessments.

## Stackable Credentials Enable Higher-Wage Jobs

California and Oregon's community college systems and Wisconsin's technical college system are creating short-term, credit-bearing credentials embedded in longer-term programs. These credentials help students gain the competencies they need to qualify for entry-level employment, as well as earn stackable

credentials and credits they can use should they choose to continue their education and achieve the next credential.

Stackable credentials are a series of classes that lead to a higher-level educational credential, making them potentially more valuable to students than noncredit courses or stand-alone short-term certificates that are associated with lower earnings. Further, since these short-term programs are embedded in longer-term programs that are eligible for federal student financial aid, qualifying students can access aid while earning the credential.

A welding program at Butte-Glenn Community College in California offers students in its year-long program, which includes 40 hours of instruction, five days a week and extends through the summer, stackable credentials at the end of each semester. Students can earn certifications from the American Welding Society, National Center for Construction Education and Research and American Petroleum Institute, as well as a specialized certificate in natural gas and petrochemical pipeline welding created by the college in partnership with Pacific Gas & Electric. In 2014, the cohort of 55 students earned a total of 258 credentials and every student was placed in a well-paying job. All of the college credits are transferable toward an associate of science degree.

### Kansas Accelerating Opportunities for Students

The Kansas Board of Regents, in partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce, is leading the Accelerating Opportunity initiative in Kansas, also known as AO-K, to transform adult education by delivering Career Technical Education, or CTE, and adult basic skills instruction simultaneously.

Students gain basic skills in areas such as literacy, English as a Second Language and basic math in the context of a career pathway. They are able to complete short-term certificate programs aligned with labor market needs, leading to industry-recognized endorsed credentials. This effort—also occurring in Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas—is part of a national initiative managed by Jobs for the Future and funded by private foundations.

Since January 2012, AO-K enrolled about 3,500 individuals in more than 30 high-demand career pathway programs. Of those individuals, about 44 percent have earned a college credential, 32 percent have completed a 12-credit hour pathway and 25 percent are gainfully employed. In total, more than 4,000 industry-recognized credentials have been awarded.

Kansas also is taking steps to increase the number of industry-recognized credentials being earned by secondary students in certain high-demand fields such as health care, welding, manufacturing and aero-structures. Legislation passed in 2012, Senate Bill 155, launched “Excel in CTE,” a program through which the state offers high school students free college tuition in approved CTE courses at Kansas technical and community colleges. The program also provides school districts with a \$1,000 incentive for each high school student who graduates from that district with an industry-recognized credential in a “high-need, high-demand” occupation, as approved by the state. Since the 2011–12 school year, more than 18,000 students have participated, earning about 130,000 college credit hours in career technical education courses

and nearly 2,700 industry-recognized credentials. The number of students earning industry-recognized credentials has doubled from 2013 to 2014 as a result of this initiative.

### California’s Career Pathways Trust Connects Business and Education

In July 2013, the California Department of Education established the California Career Pathways Trust, a competitive grant program designed to prepare students for college and careers by connecting employers to students and training students in high-demand fields. Funding from the trust allows local school districts, county education offices, charter schools and community college districts to apply for a one-time grant for funding up to \$15 million.

Proposed by former State Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg, the trust was allocated \$250 million as a designated portion of the state’s K–14 education budget. The primary goal of these grants is to effectively create long-lasting partnerships between local businesses and K–12 and community college students, and to prepare students for the modern economy.

“My top priority is to better prepare California students for college and careers in the 21st century,” said California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson in a news release. He said the grants “provide vital support for innovative and effective career tech programs that keep students engaged in school and prepare them for real-world jobs.”

State officials received more than 120 applications requesting \$700 million, nearly triple the program’s allocated budget, by the March 2014 application deadline. In May 2014, successful applicants received 39 awards totaling \$248 million to target high-need industries ranging from medical technology and engineering to information and digital media, and began partnering with companies such as Time Warner, Boeing, Tyson Foods, Southern California Gas and Bayer.

Based on the overwhelming popularity of the first round of applications for \$250 million in grant funding, the California Legislature in June 2014 approved an additional \$250 million for a second round of funding. “The goal of this second round of funding for the Career Pathways Trust grant is to substantially increase the numbers of students graduating from our high schools and community colleges with the preparation to address the workforce development needs of local business and industry,” Torlakson said.

As part of the second round of grant funding, eight rural, local educational agencies throughout the state will share \$4.2 million in grants provided for the purpose of planning effective career pathway programs to be implemented in the subsequent year. Specifically, these grants are intended to assist interested groups in examining the feasibility of creating local and regional consortia in their areas, and ultimately start the process of establishing one or more career pathways.

In May 2015, the California Department of Education awarded another \$244 million in implementation grants to 40 recipients with business partners such as Intel, Qualcomm and the Port of Los Angeles, among other companies. Schools in San Jose, San Francisco, Fresno, Irvine, San Diego and other areas were selected as grant recipients. In addition to medical and technological fields, schools are devoting

their grant resources to teacher training and building networks with businesses related to advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and plant and animal science.

The California Department of Education is planning to contract for an independent evaluation of the California Career Pathways Trust that is expected to be completed in late 2016.

## **Focus on Ohio's MC2 STEM School Powered by GE**

In February 2009, GE Lighting opened its Ohio plant to help establish the first known high school embedded on an industrial campus. The MC2 STEM High School, which closely links GE employees and students, began as other Cleveland schools were struggling for survival.

"In 2006 and 2007, the Cleveland school system was failing," said Andrea Timan, GE Lighting's community relations manager and liaison to the MC2 STEM High School. "Only 62 percent of students were graduating. ... GE had had a longstanding partnership with one of the local high schools in Cleveland and that partnership was failing as well."

Timan said GE representatives met with school district officials in 2007 to see how they could support education.

"We didn't have millions and millions of dollars to pour into the school district anymore," Timan said. "Business was changing. But we have people and we have time to give."

GE employees are paired with students to serve as mentors and sounding boards. Sophomores are divided into groups and work with GE employees in a project that gives students the chance to brainstorm, design, finance and market a new product that is presented to a leadership team at the company. A small group of seniors comes back to the GE campus and is paid to work with teams of employees on actual company projects.

"We really, truly work together to create one of the most unique partnerships in America," Timan said.

And so far, the results have been impressive. Timan reported the MC2 STEM High School—which has 100 percent of the student body qualifying for free or reduced price meals—has had a 95 percent graduation rate for the past three years. Graduates have gone on to universities such as Harvard, Cornell and Case Western Reserve. It also has served as a model for similar schools across the country and a program in Egypt.

## **Business Highlight**

### **AAR**

In recent years, AAR has encountered hiring challenges as it seeks to fill positions related to aerospace and defense. As a result, the company established a program to rebuild its talent pipeline by partnering with community colleges, technical schools and universities to develop curricula and training programs in four

cities—Indianapolis; Oklahoma City; Hot Springs, Ark.; and Goldsboro, N.C. AAR, the largest independent maintenance, repair and overhaul service provider, aims to address the disconnect between what educational institutions are teaching and the needs of businesses, shorten the time it takes to get students work-ready and introduce aviation careers to students at a younger age.

**How It Works:** In Indianapolis, AAR worked with Vincennes University to develop curricula and training for airframe and powerplant mechanics and sheet metal technicians. It recruits university students for two on-the-job and apprenticeship training initiatives at its Indianapolis Maintenance Center. The company also created two new job classifications—maintenance intern and support technician—to get workers into the pipeline faster and allow them to earn a paycheck while they learn.

In Oklahoma City, AAR teamed up with Francis Tuttle Technology Center to design a registered apprenticeship and training program for sheet metal technicians. It also has an internship program with Western Heights High School in Oklahoma. In Hot Springs, where AAR has an aircraft maintenance facility near the regional airport, the company worked with National Park Community College to develop an aerospace training program giving students the skills necessary for entry-level positions in the aerospace industry.

And in North Carolina, AAR Mobility Systems partnered with Wayne Community College to develop a fast-track welding certification program, as well as an Introduction to Manufacturing course. The company also collaborated with local educators and other organizations in Goldsboro to spearhead adoption of the Career Readiness Certificate, a nationally portable skills credential.

**The Business Case:** These new partnerships have allowed AAR to begin to rebuild its talent pool and ramp up operations by creating clear pathways to middle-income careers. Aerospace, like all business, is cyclical and at times uncertain. Through its partnerships with the education community, AAR has improved access to a qualified workforce to keep business local and help spur economic growth.

**Student Success Story:** Aaron Patterson was a shelter technician at AAR Mobility Systems. His job was to grind down the welds made by his better-trained colleagues, the welders, who earned between \$4 and \$5 an hour more than "grinders."

Patterson's boss recommended him for the eight-week welding certification course that Wayne Community College customized for AAR. He completed the course and passed his shop floor exam a week later. Once certified, he moved up to welding—and up the pay scale—immediately.

"I was thinking about getting a better job. But I never thought I would be a welder," said Patterson. "I'm thinking about going back for my two-year degree in welding so I can learn everything."

**State Policy Context:** Institutions partnering with AAR are bolstered by state and institutional policies that encourage collaboration between industry and education to improve student workforce outcomes. The North Carolina Community College System, also known as NCCCS, is expanding its focus on technical fields and increasing opportunities for students to earn industry-

recognized credentials and participate in work-based learning in critical industry sectors. In *Techniques* magazine—produced by the Association for Community & Technical Education—NCCCS’ Matthew Meyer, Associate Vice President for STEM Innovations, explained that the initiatives include a pilot of the National Association of Manufacturing-endorsed Skills Certification System, as well as the Code Green Super Curriculum Improvement Process, to integrate industry skill standards, as validated by appropriate certifications, into curricula. In addition, the state has launched an initiative to visit employers in each of North Carolina’s 100 counties to listen to industry workforce needs.

On the secondary level, as reported in the 2011–12 Consolidated Annual Report prepared by the state for the U.S. Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, North Carolina utilizes a system of post-assessments developed or adopted at the state level and validated by business and industry to measure technical skills attainment. Industry input also was critical to the development of the state’s Standard Course of Study, the content standards developed by grade level and for each high school course to set consistent learning standards for every public school. In addition, the state utilizes several school models that emphasize industry partnership and alignment, such as career academies and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics schools.

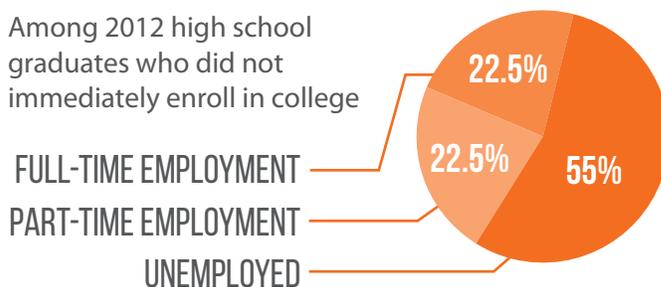
## PREPARING EDUCATORS ALONG THE K-16 CONTINUUM

Options for states to consider:

- Require schools of education to develop pre-service curriculum that address models of workforce development and employment engagement in the classroom such as, but not limited to, internships, employer exchanges, co-operative education, mentoring programs, job readiness, etc.
- Create a flexible program to recruit, train and retain qualified professionals who are able to provide relevant instruction that prepares learners to more ably enter the workforce.
- Incentivize career and workforce training instructors to collaborate with general education and basic skills instructors to develop and deliver integrated courses and programs.
- As a part of ongoing instructor professional development or through pursuit of continuing education units, explore ways that teachers and leaders can be meaningfully trained around the needs of the workforce and translate this knowledge into classroom curriculum.
- Create a flexible program to recruit, train and retain qualified industry professionals that are able to provide relevant instruction that prepares learners to more ably enter the workforce.
- Ensure instructors from industry have the pedagogical skills needed to teach technical education courses.

## HIGH SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

Among 2012 high school graduates who did not immediately enroll in college



**30%** of high school dropouts, age 16–19, are employed

**ONLY 5% OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE**  
2012 high school graduates looking for full-time work had found it within one year.

» Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., & McHugh, W., *The Complete Breakdown in the High School-to-Work Transition of Young, Non-College Enrolled High School Graduates in the U.S.; The Need for an Immediate Policy Response*, 2013

### Focus on Data Science in Ohio

The field of data science and analytics is experiencing explosive growth across specialized professions. Reports indicate that the deluge of data is growing at a rate of about 40 percent a year and has the potential to add some \$300 billion of value to the nation’s health care sector alone. Virtually all sectors, both public and private, are experiencing sharp demand for data science trained employees.

Despite this growth, there are relatively few opportunities for undergraduates to become skilled in data analytics. A study by the Business-Higher Education Forum, or BHEF, revealed that most data science programs are available only at the graduate level and typically are offered through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics departments that often lack the diversity needed in the workforce. Increasingly, employers and students are calling for more courses, concentrations, minors and majors in data science, but significant challenges remain for academic institutions to develop undergraduate pathways in this rapidly evolving area. The Business-Higher Education Forum is moving aggressively to build partnerships between postsecondary institutions and employers across sectors that share a common goal to launch undergraduate programs in data science.

Due in part to its high concentration of data-driven companies and regional efforts to catalyze innovation and workforce

development through higher education, Ohio was a natural choice for BHEF to begin building partnerships to promote data science and analytics programs. In Cleveland, home to Case Western Reserve University—a major private research institution with a strong tradition in undergraduate education—and numerous companies acutely concerned about their data-skilled workforce, BHEF facilitated a process through which a range of partners worked to determine the workforce skills needed in data science and developed undergraduate tracks around those identified needs. Case Western Reserve announced the launch of a new undergraduate major and minor in data science in 2014, designed to prepare a new generation of data science experts to improve performance in health, production and manufacturing, and energy.

Case Western Reserve's new undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree program in data science focuses on real-world applications in the areas of health, energy, and manufacturing and production. It includes such dimensions as mathematical modeling of data sources; examining raw data using analytics that focus on inference through the transformation of data to actionable information that improves decision-making; and visual analytics and user experiences. The program also features an experiential learning component through partnerships with industry that provide co-op assignments and internship opportunities for students.

To help bring the application of data science to a variety of fields, Case Western has developed an applied data science undergraduate minor that can be paired with any undergraduate major at the institution. Students can choose from eight subdomains within engineering and physical sciences, health and business. Among the tools and applications covered by the minor are data management, distributed computing, statistical analytics and informatics.

In Columbus, Ohio, civic leaders, business executives and others launched the Columbus Collaboratory, an advanced technology company that brings together a group of noncompeting companies and other stakeholders to focus on regional workforce and economic development issues and drive solutions in the areas of big data, analytics and cybersecurity. Attracting IBM's Client Center for Advanced Analytics to Central Ohio in 2013 was an early achievement of the group. The center brings new analytics and technology talent to the area and encourages existing talent to remain in Central Ohio.

To develop the kind of talent pool needed to enable the region to continue this progress, the Ohio Board of Regents approved a new interdisciplinary undergraduate major in data analytics at The Ohio State University in 2014. Drawing upon the Business-Higher Education Forum's strategic engagement model, the university worked with regional business partners to identify core elements for both the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of the program.

Opened to students in fall 2014, the major is comprised of three basic parts: core courses, a specialization and a capstone—or internship—experience through business partnerships. The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering are partnering to deliver the core courses in computer sciences, mathematics and statistics. Students learn principles of data representation and management, computer programming, and statistical modeling and analysis.

The core curriculum focuses on fundamental principles for all areas of data analytics and consists of courses taken by all majors. In these courses, students investigate the computational, mathematical and statistical foundations of data analytics, and also develop such deeper learning skills as critical thinking and effective communication. Each student in the major chooses an area of specialization to learn how data analytics is applied in a particular field. Coursework in some specializations can be tailored based on a student's interests.

The program seeks to develop in students both highly technical skillsets and the ability to function in solutions-oriented teams. All students participate in a capstone or an integrative experiential component as part of their chosen specialization.

## ACCESS TO AND SUCCESS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Options for states to consider:

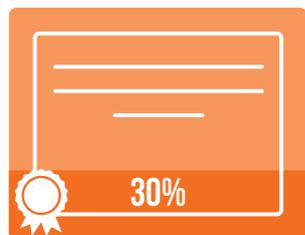
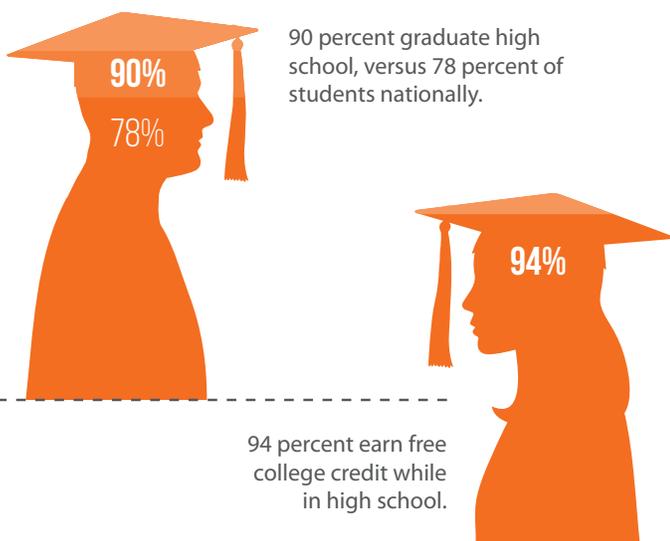
- Ensure that transportation for education and workforce training is not a barrier and is made available to all students by using subsidies, incentives, public/private partnerships or other funding strategies.
- Ensure that all learners have access to a professional trained to provide mentorship and coaching around career options and pathways.
- Leverage existing public and private partnerships and funding to ensure that every community has sufficient broadband access for workforce training.
- Ensure that costs to the student are not a barrier to obtaining meaningful workforce training and credentials through, but not limited to, grants, loans and subsidies.
- Encourage private sector investment in workforce training through, but not limited to, employer matching programs, tax incentives and foundation grants.
- Adopt a funding model for higher education and workforce training aligned to state goals and priorities with an emphasis on limiting tuition increases, rewarding on-time completion and acknowledging through wage and employment data those that complete specialized training programs.
- Adopt early-college and dual-credit course models in K-12 to provide college credit and offer opportunities for industry certification to K-12 students, thereby providing learners the opportunity to avoid long-term expense and be more prepared to enter the workforce.
- Provide a system for proactive advising, check-ins, early warning and mapping for all learners to ensure progress toward workforce education goals.

# JOBS FOR THE FUTURE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Early College High Schools allow more students—particularly low-income and minority students—to engage in rigorous high school and college-level coursework in highly supportive school environments.

**280** Early College High Schools  
serve **80,000+** STUDENTS  
in **31 states** and the District of Columbia.

## Among Early College High School students:



» Jobs for the Future, "Reinventing High Schools for Postsecondary Success," 2014

- Define and measure the effectiveness of state education programs related to outcomes that meet the workforce needs of business and learners.

## State Snapshots

### New Hampshire Job Training

New Hampshire Works is a collaboration of state agencies and community organizations committed to providing programs for job seekers and for employers in need of skilled workers. More than 96 percent of training graduates find full-time employment after completing the program, which provides job seekers the opportunity to build on existing competencies, learn new skills and bring home a paycheck. The concept also is beneficial to businesses that adopt apprenticeships and on-the-job training; enabling them to acquire new workers and obtain financial assistance from the state to participate in registered apprenticeship programs.

### Ohio Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program

Ohio launched an employer-driven training program in 2013—the Ohio Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program. The program provides grants to Ohio businesses looking to train their current workforce to prepare them for the jobs of the future. On a reimbursement basis, the program provides direct financial assistance to offset a portion of an employer's costs to upgrade the skills of its existing workforce. Eligible employers must demonstrate that, by receiving funding assistance through the program, their business will "not only obtain a skilled workforce but will improve their company processes and competitiveness," according to program materials.

The training program is funded from casino licensing fees to offset a portion of employers' costs to upgrade the skills of its incumbent workforce and is growing. \$20 million was allocated in the 2013 fiscal year and \$30 million was available for the 2014 fiscal year. Another \$30 million is available in 2015. In tight budget times, making sure those dollars are being used appropriately is paramount. Funds cover up to 50 percent of the cost of eligible training—up to \$4,000 per employee and up to \$250,000 per employer, per fiscal year.

Targeted industries include advanced manufacturing, aerospace and aviation, automotive, bio-health, corporate headquarters, energy, financial services, food processing, information technology and services, polymers and chemicals, back office, logistics and research and development.

### Wisconsin Fast Forward Initiative Worker Training Grants

In 2013, Gov. Scott Walker signed Wisconsin Act 9, which created the Wisconsin Fast Forward initiative. The initiative allocates state funds to help companies train new and current employees, administered through a grant application program.

Once the law was signed, things moved quickly: Within six months, the Department of Workforce Development established the Office

of Skills Development to administer the program, designed the grant program, developed applicable administrative rules and issued the first round of grant announcements in November 2013. The parameters of the program were developed with input from a number of stakeholders.

The first round of grants allocated \$2.7 million and climbed to more than \$7 million in the second round. A total of \$15 million has been authorized for the 2013–15 biennium. The initial round of grants focused on training workers in the manufacturing, construction and customer service sectors. Employers played a key role in how the training programs were designed and administered. While the cost of training per employee factors into the scoring criteria during the grant evaluation process, the program doesn't include a funding cap per employee. Employers can apply for up to \$400,000 per year and requires businesses to provide cash or an in-kind match of between 50 cents and \$1 for each grant dollar awarded.

While employer input is essential to the program, developing ways for employers to collaborate with other partners is another key component. In the initial rounds, more than 80 employers participated with collaborative partners.

### Washington Utilizes SNAP Funds for Workforce Training

Washington has been trying to help get its unemployed residents trained and into the workforce using a little-known program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps.

Washington will receive almost \$30 million in federal funding to run its Basic Food Employment and Training program, which served between 12,000 and 13,000 people in 2013.

"It's what's called a third-party match model, which means the state doesn't actually do the groundwork," said Bob Thibodeau, lead program manager for food assistance in Washington state and former manager for the Basic Food Employment and Training program. "We contract with agencies, with community and technical colleges, and community-based organizations that specialize in this type of work."

Thibodeau said the colleges provide the training to get enrollees into the workforce, while community-based organizations help them overcome other potential barriers, such as housing, child care and transportation.

The program started in 2005 as a pilot with the Seattle Jobs Initiative, a nonprofit group that began as part of Seattle's Office of Economic Development.

Career navigators work with each person in the program, helping them access any services they might need and helping them navigate the college system. Right now, the initiative is focusing on four different sectors where there is demand in Seattle—health care, business/information technology, manufacturing (primarily welding), and logistics and trade (primarily mechanics).

Since the career pathways program started in 2012, 900 individuals have been trained by the Seattle initiative—about 85–90 percent of them have been participants in the Basic Food Employment and Training program. After three months on a job, 92 percent of those people were still employed. After long-term career training, the average wage of people placed in jobs is \$16.62 per hour.

### Rhode Island Implements *employRI.org*

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training now requires individuals eligible for state unemployment benefits to post their resumes to *employRI.org*, a state-run free jobs board, within six weeks of filing. The new requirement is among several changes the department is making in how it works with the state's unemployed population.

Already through federal grant funding, the Department of Labor and Training has expanded some of its interviews with unemployment insurance claimants in an effort to better link the unemployed with jobs. The state also provides job training and career counseling services through the netWORKri centers.

Eligible Rhode Islanders are able to claim benefits for up to 26 weeks, although department officials said the average claimant receives benefits for slightly more than 16 weeks.

### Wisconsin Initiative Focuses on Workers with Disabilities

People with disabilities face a number of challenges in the workforce—from barriers to hiring to low wages—but an initiative by Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker helps change that. In his 2014 State of the State address, Walker announced a new program, "A Better Bottom Line," to address the challenges for workers with disabilities.

The initiative aims to increase the employment rate of individuals with developmental disabilities by working with companies to encourage hiring. Walker proposed \$800,000 to expand an on-the-job training program for disabled works from seven to 27 companies within three years.

In November 2014, Walker announced \$600,000 would be available for worker training grants to help more than 200 people with disabilities develop demand-driven skills to reach their employment goals. The funds are part of the \$35.4 million *Wisconsin Fast Forward—Blueprint for Prosperity* initiative, which supports job-related training to advance Wisconsin's working families along a path toward greater prosperity and independence.

Walker's initiative seeks to decrease wait lists at technical colleges for those wishing to enter high-demand fields and stimulates collaborative partnerships among local school districts, community and technical colleges, and businesses.

Wisconsin also is expanding Project SEARCH, a program helping young people with disabilities transition successfully from high school to the job market. An additional \$850,000 in funds will help expand of the number of participating businesses over the next three years.

## **Focus on Tennessee Tuition-Free Education**

As part of Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 initiative—which focuses on getting 55 percent of the state's residents to complete a college degree or certificate by 2025—the Tennessee Promise will kick off in fall 2015.

The Tennessee Promise offers two years of tuition-free community or technical college and is called a last-dollar scholarship. Students must apply for financial aid and other scholarships; the state picks up the tab for the amount left unfunded for two years.

"Tennessee Promise, it requires some skin in the game by the (student) too," said Warren Nichols, vice chancellor for Tennessee's Community Colleges. "They must do eight hours of community service per semester and they must also work with a mentor, which is an adult volunteer from the community."

Nichols said the state is estimating the program will cost about \$34 million per year, which will be funded by the proceeds of the state lottery. That money previously had been used to fund a different scholarship program.

The University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research predicts that between 16,000 and 19,000 students will benefit from Tennessee Promise scholarship funds in fall 2015. Because of the initiative, completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, by Tennessee students increased 12 percent in one year, placing Tennessee ahead of all other states and representing 40 percent of the nation's total growth in FAFSA filings in 2015. Additionally, Tennessee Promise is an access point for first-generation collegiates and for those predominantly low-income students, with 48 percent of students receiving full Pell benefits.

Nichols said Tennessee Promise is the beginning of a new conversation in the state about higher education.

"The conversation that has occurred with these 60,000 students who initially applied for Tennessee Promise, whether they had any intention of going or not, that is 60,000 individual conversations that are occurring about students going to college," he said. "It's a conversation they're having with someone about their future in higher education. That's a tremendous move forward right there."

## **Focus on Kentucky Building the Pipeline between Education and Industry**

Through Kentucky's Sector Strategy initiative, a comprehensive approach to address skill needs across targeted industries within a region, the commonwealth's officials have identified areas of need and projected job growth throughout the Bluegrass state. The evidence points to not only the need for a skilled workforce, but also the areas in which they will be needed.

Workforce training doesn't necessarily have to begin after high school. Some studies have suggested that even middle school

students need career education if they are to have the adequate knowledge to make career-related course choices at the high school level.

Kentucky has 95 secondary career and technical centers—or area technology centers—that provide dozens of career education programs for students who are interested in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

At the next level, Kentucky has one of the most comprehensive community and technical college systems in the country. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System, also known as KCTCS, consists of 16 colleges and more than 70 campuses throughout the state. For many of the programs offered at community and technical colleges, there are articulation agreements with their secondary counterparts to keep students from replicating classes. There also is a statewide dual credit agreement between the two systems, allowing high school students to gain college credit for certain programs.

While industry works to change the image of old-style factories versus the reality of modern manufacturing facilities, the career and technical education sector also is fighting misperceptions of their institutions as the old vocational school held by many individuals. There are initiatives to combat that, however.

The Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education and KCTCS began a marketing campaign in 2013 aimed at showcasing community college programs using former career and technical education students while giving students a look at the available programs. As part of that initiative, the "Reach Higher with CTE" marketing campaign was created using existing resources to help change the mindset some parents, students, teachers and administrators have when it comes to CTE, highlighting programs steeped in technology—from traditional welding to high-tech computer-aided drafting classes.

Also in 2013, the Northern Kentucky Industrial Park Industry Partnership developed the "Dream It, Do It" program focused toward area high school students. The campaign was designed to get students interested in the opportunities available to them locally through advanced manufacturing jobs, complete with videos and an ambassador program.

In the 2014 session of the state legislature, seed funding of \$250,000 was allocated to further study the idea of collaborative technical high school/early technical college. This initiative brought together five school districts in collaboration with Jefferson Community and Technical College to develop an academy known as the iLEAD Academy offering students education and training needed for the region's highest-demand, highest-wage jobs. The approach includes an innovative high school model wholly integrated into regional workforce development. The first cohort of students will start in an advanced manufacturing/pre-engineering pathway in the fall of 2015.

Northern Kentucky also is home to one of the most advanced postsecondary manufacturing training facilities in the country by way of Gateway Community and Technical College's Center for Advanced Manufacturing. The center, which opened in 2005, has the capability of training hundreds of students each year in program

# THE SKILLS GAP

73%

of business leaders acknowledge a **skills gap** in the American workforce

87%

of business leaders say college graduates **lack skills needed to succeed**

97%

of CEOs recommend **experiential learning**

89%

of CEOs recommend **entrepreneurship education**



» Northeastern University, "Innovation Imperative: Enhancing the Talent Pipeline," April 2014

areas such as computer-assisted drafting, electrical technology, industrial maintenance technology, computerized manufacturing and machining, manufacturing engineering technology, mechatronics, welding technology and energy technology.

With comprehensive workforce studies in place, educational leaders don't have to justify the need for technical training; it exists already. With training programs in place at the secondary and postsecondary levels, the wheel does not have to be reinvented when it comes to providing the necessary programs needed by students to learn the skills required by these available manufacturing jobs.

- Encourage development of competency models by industry—built on local and regional data—to help inform students of the skills needed in the industry sector.
- Use data and information to continuously evaluate all pathways to high-quality education and training programs to ensure outcomes result in higher employability and better wages as students progress to careers.

## USE OF DATA

Options for states to consider:

- Ensure comprehensive data gathering and sharing to analyze skills gaps and determine outcomes and performance metrics. All stakeholder data—early childhood, K-12, institutions of higher education, wage and employment agencies—must be incorporated.
- Ensure entities processing data can handle personally identifiable information.
- Direct agencies to collaborate for development of actionable recommendations on data sharing.
- Develop a comprehensive data dictionary of common terms related to student information to convey a local/regional understanding when sharing information.
- Encourage the use of business advisory councils to help inform education decisions to ensure curriculum and instruction are relevant to workforce needs.

## State Snapshot

### Job Matchmaker

The Idaho Department of Labor launched a new website, *chooseldaho.gov*, to help match job seekers with employment opportunities. The initiative is designed to identify skilled workers—both inside the state and beyond its borders—for available jobs in Idaho, which has an increasing number of employment openings. The website is free for both job seekers and companies recruiting new workers.

### Focus on Michigan Refocusing Economic Development Efforts

Michigan has a new way of looking at incentives.

Steve Arwood, CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, said the state is moving quickly away from tax incentives to attract companies to the state.

"We are going to more of a front-loaded cash incentive basis where we work with companies upfront," said Arwood. "I think companies are often faced with a wide range of options. ... Our staff is retooled to really focus on what are your immediate needs and we get in the immediate needs business."

The move from long-term tax incentives can help legislators plan better for economic development efforts each year, instead of trying to determine the cost of tax credits down the road, he said.

Sen. Wayne Schmidt, chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, said the cash incentives also can include assistance in preparing the workforce needed to fill a new plant or an expansion. The state can work with community colleges to provide the continuing education to ensure not only that the new workforce is trained, but that those workers also are kept up to date with their skills.

“That is a big change,” Schmidt said. “Rather than just tossing some tax break, we are offering tools and educational opportunities to help them up front when they’re getting those businesses started and moving from that fledgling level to the next stage.”

In fact, Michigan is focusing more on the worker training aspect as part of a refocused economic development strategy, especially when it comes to manufacturing training.

For the longest time, he said, manufacturing was big in the state. It is again, with not only a resurgence in auto manufacturing, but also in the aerospace and oil and natural gas machinery industry.

“We’re putting a new polish on it,” said Schmidt.

That “polish” comes through an emphasis on ensuring manufacturing companies have the workers they need to build the automobiles and other machines. In fact, Gov. Rick Snyder has refocused the state’s economic development efforts through a new Department of Talent and Economic Development.

The new department will leverage all the forces of economic development into one spot. That means pulling together the different areas that can impact economic development—such as housing availability, workforce development and education, and business attraction and retention.

## MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

Options for states to consider:

- Align education standards to industry-based competencies necessary for the workplace.
- Measure strengths and needs of the workforce to ensure education entities are providing relevant curriculum and instruction.
- Consider emphasizing return on investment for executive, legislative and judicial action, including emphasis on monetary and social issues related to a skilled workforce and economic benefits to states.
- Ensure courses are evaluated to determine relevance to student career pathways.
- Ensure governing authorities, universities and other educational entities review general education program requirements to eliminate redundancy, or encourage such action.

- Support fair and equitable assessments to identify a student’s skill sets.
- Eliminate barriers to and advance development of skills needed for students’ career choice.
- Set the goal that within 10 years, 60 percent of graduates will go to postsecondary education without remedial intervention.

## State Snapshot

### Oregon’s Four Ps for Prosperity

The Oregon Business Council, an association of more than 40 business community leaders, annually releases the Oregon Business Plan, which explores strategies for the state to create 25,000 jobs each year, increase the state’s per capita income above the U.S. average by 2020 and reduce poverty below 10 percent by 2020. The 2015 plan focuses on three main themes—connecting education to careers, modernizing the state’s infrastructure and putting natural resources to work to help rural parts of the state. With its focus on the four Ps for prosperity—people, place, productivity and pioneering innovation—Oregon is advancing its economic development efforts in education, quality of life, basic infrastructure and the regulatory climate.

## Business Highlights

### Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Pacific Gas and Electric Co., a San Francisco-based utility providing energy to much of California, began its PowerPathway program in 2008 because of two converging issues: a shortage of skilled applicants and an increase in retirements from its workforce. Through PowerPathway, PG&E has collaborated with

local community and four-year colleges, the public workforce development system and unions to educate and train its next generation of employees.

**How It Works:** Applicants to the PowerPathway program who perform well on a screening, assessment tests and an in-person interview are selected as finalists for the program. They are invited to enroll in a 10- to 12-week training course provided at several local community colleges. There is no cost to attend, and local Workforce Investment Boards help students access support services such as identifying, screening, and assessing students for the program or providing case management services leading to gainful employment. PG&E’s role in the program differs depending on the needs of the partner involved, but may include curriculum design, development and delivery of train-the-trainer programs, or technical assistance and employment opportunities for program graduates.

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates receive a certificate from the community college and the PowerPathway program. These two certificates demonstrate that the graduate is a work-ready and a competitive candidate for employment within the energy and utilities sector. Some community colleges also offer credit for successful completion.

**The Results:** Of the students who have graduated from PowerPathway through the first quarter of 2012, 71 percent have been hired into such positions as utility worker, apprentice electrician, gas service representative, materials handler or nuclear security guard. Seventy percent of those hired from the program progressing into apprenticeships or higher job classifications within one year of hiring. The rate of retention after six months also is significantly higher for program graduates—98 percent versus 88 percent for the same skilled craft classifications. In addition, nearly 90 percent of PG&E supervisors who have hired PowerPathway graduates said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their performance. When PG&E met its hiring capacity and realized that it would not be able to hire all program graduates, the company invited other California energy employers to consider those who complete the PowerPathway program.

PG&E also has developed seven veterans-only programs through which more than 150 military personnel have been trained, and is a pilot company for the Troops to Energy Jobs initiative, a program of the Center for Energy Workforce Development. In a bid to foster diversity and give underserved youth an opportunity to enter the energy and utility industry, 25 percent of PowerPathway's enrollment has been allocated to low-income youth ages 18 to 26 in northern and central California.

**Student Success Story:** Ezekiel Robles joined the military right out of high school at the age of 17 and left at 22 to begin the next chapter of his life. Bent on starting his own business, Robles began attending the University of Phoenix and was a semester shy of obtaining his degree when he got a job as an electrician apprentice. Robles wasn't able to complete his degree due to work demands and spent the next three years working as an apprentice. In the meantime, Robles sought acceptance into the PG&E PowerPathway Program. In June 2011, he was accepted into the program and was employed by PG&E within two months of completing the program.

He has a number of duties as an apprentice system operator for PG&E, including troubleshooting power outages and upgrading lines. Robles said the road to success in the program, as in life, comes down to one thing—persistence.

"Never give up," he said, "Don't get discouraged."

Robles added that prospective employees who are looking into a career need to be proactive; they need to find out what qualifications are required for their chosen career field and work toward getting the experience that will get them a foot in the door.

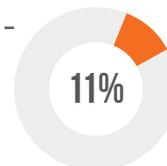
**State Policy Context:** Initiatives such as PG&E's are part of a larger effort in California to better integrate industry standards and workforce needs into education programs. In 2014, the California legislature established the Career Pathways Trust grants to provide funds for high-quality career pathway programs. Grant recipients—secondary and postsecondary educational institutions—must ensure pathway programs lead to a degree or certification in a high-skill, high-wage and high-growth or emerging field, as well as foster collaboration, provide articulated pathways, prioritize work-based learning, and leverage existing funding and programs. The state also is incentivizing students to pursue postsecondary education in priority programs and industry clusters through the

## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE



96 percent of chief academic officers at postsecondary institutions are extremely or somewhat **confident in their institution's ability to prepare students for the workforce.**

Only 11 percent of business leaders **strongly agree** that college graduates have the skills needed by employers.



» Lucia Anderson Weathers, "Today's business leaders say, 'It's what you know, not where you go' when making hiring decisions, new study shows," Lumina Foundation, February 2014

Cal Grant C program for occupational and technical training. Cal Grant C funds can be used for tuition and related training costs such as books and supplies.

In addition, California's Career and Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards were designed to prepare high school students to be both career- and college-ready and were created with input from more than 300 representatives from business and industry, labor, and secondary and postsecondary education. According to the 2011–12 Consolidated Annual Report prepared by the state for the U.S. Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, all CTE courses and programs in California have developed or adopted technical skill assessments based on industry standards. The state also fosters industry-education alignment through Linked Learning, an educational strategy that blends rigorous academics, technical education and experiential learning, and the California Partnership Academies. The academies are three-year programs for 10th- through 12th-graders that provide rigorous academics and Career and Technical Education in one of 15 industry sectors and mandate industry partnerships.

### Toyota T-Ten

The Toyota Technician Training and Education Network, also known as T-TEN, was established in 1986 to prepare talented, career-minded individuals to work as service technicians at Toyota, Lexus and Scion dealerships. T-TEN accomplishes this mission through its partnerships with 40 public and private institutions in a number of states.

**How It Works:** The T-TEN program—a partnership between Toyota, community colleges, career and technical schools, and dealerships—provides state-of-the-art automotive training in both classroom and laboratory settings and enhanced by supervised internships at dealerships. T-TEN requires a two-year commitment and an average of about 1,200 combined hours. Program options include an associate degree program where participants combine automotive technology instruction with general education courses, and a two-year certificate program that focuses entirely on automotive technology skills.

**The Business Case and Results:** Auto dealerships play a huge role in the U.S. economy. Total dealership sales are about \$609 billion a year; almost one out of eight retail dollars are spent at car dealerships. Dealerships are always in need of talented workers to keep up with increasing demand, and the outcomes for T-TEN participants so far are promising. Approximately 19 percent of Toyota and Lexus dealerships' current technician workforce was hired as a result of the program. Between 85 and 90 percent of participants who complete the program are hired at Toyota or Lexus dealerships, with a 65 percent retention rate after one year of employment. T-TEN is good for Toyota's bottom line, but it's also sound practice in workforce development and good business for the American economy.

**Student Success Story:** Sam Houston is looking forward to a bright future doing what he loves.

He took a detour before entering the T-TEN program, working in the hospitality and food service industries.

"I had no automotive background," he said. "I was an adult who decided to change my life and pursue a childhood dream of working on cars."

An average day at his T-TEN program at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, Ky., was a mix of hands-on learning and training in an automotive shop that is up-to-date with the latest technology and the newest cars on the market. Houston noted that instructors are supportive and that the program prepared him to be work-ready.

"Upon completion, you are ready to enter the field and be productive," Houston said. "In this day and age, it is hard to find educational opportunities that directly apply to your future career. Also, you get to meet and become friends with people who have similar interests as you do. I have made many friends for life while attending the program."

Upon graduation Houston was classified as a Toyota-certified expert technician with two years of work experience. He's also an ASE Master Technician and earned an associate of Applied Science in automotive technology, with high distinction. Qualified technicians like Houston will thrive in an industry that covets their experience and training. Houston plans to return to the classroom one day—as an instructor.

"Your education is an investment in your future, so you should choose wisely and find something that suits you best," he said. "The T-TEN program has changed my life forever. It has given me a career to be proud of and allows me to support my family in ways I only dreamed of before."

**State Policy Context:** In Kentucky, programs like T-TEN are flourishing as the state encourages alignment across levels of education and the workforce. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System, or KCTCS, has been working on a multi-year project to align technical program content to business and industry standards and identify an end-of-program assessment that measures a student's knowledge of program competencies that meet those standards, according to the 2012–13 Consolidated Annual Report prepared by the state for the U.S. Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education.

This industry alignment is not confined to the postsecondary level. Kentucky's Occupational Skills Standards Assessments and Certification System is based on standards identified by employers across the state. Every program area has either an industry certification or a state/nationally developed end-of-program assessment. Students who pass the assessment will be awarded the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Certificate. In 2013, the commonwealth also piloted the Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky—or TRACK—program, a partnership between the state Office of Career and Technical Education and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to secondary students.

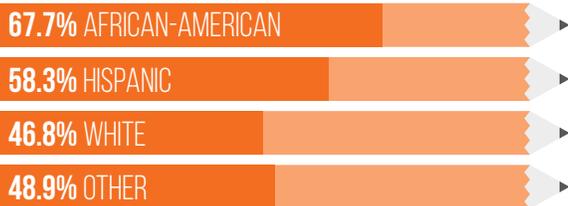
## REMIEDIATION RATES IN 2- AND 4-YEAR COLLEGES

**51.7 PERCENT** of students entering two-year colleges and **19.9 PERCENT** of those entering four-year universities are placed in remedial classes.

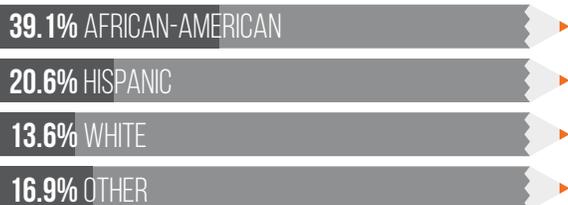
**NEARLY 4-IN-10** remedial students in community colleges never complete their remedial courses.

**FEWER THAN 1-IN-10** remedial students graduate from community colleges within three years and little more than a third complete bachelor's degrees within six years.

### REMIEDIATION RATES AT 2-YEAR COLLEGES



### REMIEDIATION RATES AT 4-YEAR COLLEGES



» Complete College America, "Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere," 2012



# SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH ▶

## SAFE AND HEALTHY FAMILIES

Options for states to consider:

- Require/encourage doctors and health professionals to conduct developmental screenings—beginning at birth—including both physical and brain development.
- Require/encourage medical and early child care professionals to provide treatment plans or referral to more specialized professional resources when early developmental screenings reveal concern and facilitate appropriate partnerships to assist with comprehensive assessment and intervention to meet pediatric health needs, such as developmental, social/emotional, vision, hearing, health, nutrition, communication/language and dental care.
- Provide or develop partnerships with community-based providers to ensure access to home visits from birth (by educators, caregivers, families, health care providers, etc.) to address mental health issues, including postpartum depression, environmental indicators, toxic stress, parenting strategies and brain development.
- Require/encourage the development of professional training grounded in strength-based and restorative practices for community service providers related to screening outcomes to ensure appropriate resources are offered based on children's screening results and existing data.
- Ensure that all children—including those with disabilities—have a comprehensive communication system by age 3 that allows independent and reciprocal language exchange across all environments, including home, school and community. This can include assistive technology and augmentative communication.
- Require/encourage quality childcare by strengthening early learning guidelines, including family engagement, and implementing standards of best practice through monitoring and technical support.

## 2014 PROMISE ZONES

Promise Zones blend community resources to produce jobs, improve educational outcomes and advance economic opportunities.

### TEXAS

Graduation rates have reached almost 90 percent, up from 46 percent in 2009.

### CALIFORNIA

In Los Angeles, 2,000 kids were able to find a summer job through a youth employment initiative.

### KENTUCKY

In southeastern Kentucky, 900 unemployed, former miners have been connected to a job.

### PENNSYLVANIA

Promise Zone partners are working with the community to develop a strategy to preserve affordability and protect long-time residents from displacement during revitalization projects.

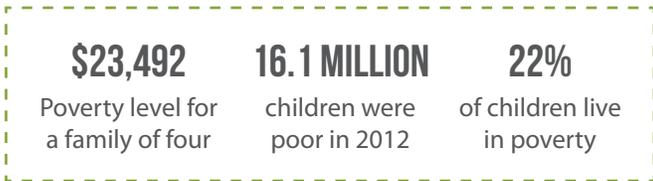
### OKLAHOMA

In southeast Oklahoma, more than 700 households and 50 businesses in the Choctaw Nation will soon have safe drinking water for the first time.



## CHILD POVERTY + EDUCATION

Children continue to be the poorest age group in America and poverty has a substantially negative impact on a number of educational outcomes.



- Facilitate access to high-quality and affordable child care and child care assistance programs as an integral part of workforce training and education.
- Create opportunities for development of executive brain function and self-regulation skills, such as cognitive processes, memory, reasoning, task flexibility, problem solving, planning and execution, through outside-of-school activities.
- Establish and promote training on suicide prevention, teen pregnancy reduction and substance abuse prevention for teacher/leaders and education staff, families, community- and faith-based service providers, and health professionals.
- Facilitate opportunities to provide family health and mental health services, including family involvement, behavior health and a comprehensive support system for both children and their families.

### State Snapshot

#### Tracking Progress

The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students was established in 2010 to help business, and civic and government leaders as they maximize the economic return on the state's investment in early child care and education. In June 2014, the group collaborated with the Frontiers of Innovation initiative at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University to determine best practices and opportunities to advance the social-emotional development of the state's youngest population. The group tracks student progress from prekindergarten through primary grades.

## IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Economic class divides American education and poverty increases student achievement gaps.

### 4TH GRADE 12TH GRADE

By the end of the fourth grade, children from low-income families score two years below grade level; by 12th grade, that delay has increased to four years below their peers.

**40%** of children living in poverty do not have the readiness skills to enter primary school.

Children living below the poverty line are 1.3 times more likely to have developmental delays or be identified as possessing learning disabilities.

**1.3 X**

## QUALITY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Options for states to consider:

- Ensure innovative and efficient uses of funds such as Title I dollars of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and prioritize their use for high-quality pre-K programs.
- Require/encourage full-day pre-K and kindergarten programs with active family involvement.
- Advance Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics, or STEAM, instruction in early childhood programs, including practices on executive function brain development and self-regulation skills.
- Require/encourage the use of professional learning communities to create positive school climate and connectedness.
- Require/encourage the use of alternative assessments that

evaluate student learning based upon the needs of the individual student.

- Require/encourage additional program supports for students and professional development for educators during curriculum and/or academic standard transitions.
- Create awareness by exposing students in K-12 to career opportunities through exploration, field studies, mentoring programs, internships, field placements and pre-apprenticeships for both college and career connectedness.
- Work with local school districts to prohibit the use of school suspension for truancy and offer programs to re-engage students and reduce school absenteeism.
- Analyze suspension and expulsion data to better understand underlying factors for the behavior leading to a violation and work with local school districts to develop alternative school discipline policies that will reduce suspension and/or expulsions.
- Provide coordinated support systems to decrease juvenile incarceration and increase alternative educational placements.
- Develop transition planning between local school districts and juvenile justice to increase the number of juvenile ex-offenders that graduate with a high school diploma and exit with employable skills.
- Increase innovative strategies for the use of technology as an integral instructional tool for students in early learning settings, K-12 education, postsecondary education and workforce training opportunities and provide appropriate training for those professionals using technological teaching tools.
- Require/encourage local school districts to engage with the business community to develop and periodically complete a workforce development survey to determine what skills are needed.
- Encourage relationships between postsecondary education institutions to develop articulation agreements and common course codes for transferrable credits.
- Encourage relationships between the business community and postsecondary education institutions to develop educational components, on-the-job training and employment opportunities.
- Explore varying models to improve access to and affordability of postsecondary education, including mixed models of educational service delivery.
- Invest more in need-based scholarships and/or grants to increase access to postsecondary education.
- Integrate technology and educational delivery models to reduce the cost of, improve access to and increase success in postsecondary education.

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF APPRENTICESHIPS

### WHAT ARE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS?

Registered apprenticeship programs combine structured learning with on-the-job training and, upon completion, participants receive an industry issued, nationally recognized credential that certifies occupational proficiency. Program duration ranges from one to six years with a majority lasting four years.

### FACTS



150,000

employers & labor mgt. organizations participate



400,000

apprenticeships available nationwide



1,000+

occupations represented

U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez

### EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

APPRENTICES EARN AN  
AVERAGE STARTING SALARY OF  
**\$50K**

... WHILE GAINING A CREDENTIAL  
THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO  
**A 2- OR 4-YEAR  
COLLEGE DEGREE.**

WORKERS WHO  
COMPLETE THE  
PROGRAM EARN

**\$300K**

MORE THAN  
THEIR PEERS  
WHO DON'T.

» U.S. Department of Labor

# UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

## School Discipline and the Dropout Crisis

Exclusionary discipline—suspensions and expulsions—is contributing to the dropout crisis, particularly for those students at greatest risk. Research shows that students who are suspended or expelled are less likely to graduate from high school, an outcome that comes with a big price tag to the nation.

### MILLIONS

of students were removed from their classroom each year, primarily for minor misconduct.

### 10 PERCENT

At least 10 percent of middle and high school students—nearly 2 million students—were suspended one or more times in the 2009–10 school year.

### 56 PERCENT

Almost 56 percent of public middle and high school students in Texas with 11 or more suspensions or expulsions dropped out, while just 18 percent of students with no disciplinary actions failed to graduate.

### HIGH RISK

When suspended, students are at a higher risk of falling behind academically, dropping out of school, and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system.

## THE COST

# \$10K

The average dropout earns \$10,386 less than the typical high school graduate.

» U.S. Census Bureau

# \$292K

The average dropout cost taxpayers \$292,000 over a lifetime.

» Northeastern University

## State Snapshots

### Connecticut's Smart Start

Connecticut has long had a commitment to increase early childhood education. Legislators in 2014 passed a bill to commit \$100 million over 10 years to move the state closer to voluntary universal preschool for all 4-year-olds. Gov. Dannel Malloy signed the bill into law to expand preschool opportunities for the state's youngest students. The Smart Start initiative opens access to high-quality pre-Kindergarten for more of the state's youngest learners.

In 2015, \$3.5 million in state funding was awarded to 14 local school districts to increase the number of students entering a pre-Kindergarten program. To receive the competitive funding, districts must justify the need to impact children in their communities. Districts can request funding for capital expenses to establish or expand a preschool program and an annual grant for operating expenses.

Smart Start classrooms must offer high-quality, early learning with set minimum requirements for school-day and school-year programming, receive and comply with accreditation standards, be in good standing with the National Association for the Education of Young Children and be approved by the federal Head Start program.

Additional criteria include a limit of 18 children in each classroom and priority enrollment for children from low-income families, those with special needs and students who are identified as dual language learners.

The state utilizes Tobacco Settlement Fund dollars to provide up to \$10 million annually.

### Georgia's Bright from the Start

Georgia has been lauded for its state-funded preschool program, which started as a pilot program targeting 750 at-risk 4-year-olds and their families in 1992. The state is one of a few that includes a strong governance structure similar to K-12 programs, a dedicated funding stream and established standards.

The state lottery provides about \$300 million a year for the preschool program, which serves about 84,000 of Georgia's 4-year-olds. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning partners with the public school system and private child care centers to provide the capacity necessary to serve the children.

But even with the multiple partners Georgia uses for its pre-K program, all students are getting the same quality education because the Georgia Pre-K Program sets uniform standards, said Kristin Bernhard, deputy commissioner for system reform.

"All of our pre-K classrooms have to use a curriculum that aligns with those early learning standards," she said. "That's one of the ways we ensure the quality of instruction and what children are learning is high and also uniform across the state."

Those standards, Bernhard said, are aligned with K-12 standards. Georgia also requires lead teachers in preschool classrooms to

have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related degree to ensure effective instruction.

### Jobs for Maine's Graduates Partners with Thomas College

In 2013, the Jobs for Maine's Graduates program launched an innovative partnership and placed the nation's first college-level Jobs for America's Graduates counselor at Thomas College in Waterville, Maine.

Thomas is a small business and liberal arts college serving 800 undergraduate students—70 percent of whom are first-generation college students. It has partnered with Jobs for Maine's Graduates to offer a support system to any student who was involved in the program at the middle or high school levels.

With support from the Unity Foundation, the counselor assists Jobs for America's Graduates—also known as JAG—college students as they navigate the often-challenging path to graduation and helps guide prospective college students through the enrollment process. Other benefits of the partnership include helping families through the financial aid process, mentoring students and working with JAG students to set a plan of action to graduate from college and enter the workforce.

Both Jobs for Maine's Graduates and Thomas share important values of investing in students as individuals, each with different needs and unique goals. They work with similar populations and are committed to ensuring not only degree completion and attainment of diplomas, but also to ensuring students have the skills and education they need to succeed in today's competitive job market.

The JAG counselor is on the front lines with these students, checking their grades like a home-away-from-home parent, connecting them with academic assistance and counseling them on any problems they may encounter while adjusting to campus life. Additionally, students receive career planning and connections with internships, job shadowing and other career preparation opportunities.

### MassGrad: Reducing State Dropout Rate

Less than a decade ago, Massachusetts' students were dropping out of school at an alarming rate. That has changed, thanks in part to a program called MassGrad, which pairs at-risk students with graduation coaches, internships and other support services.

MassGrad supports targeted schools with funding to implement evidence-based practices and strategies, provides an early college model for at-risk students, and promotes partnerships among local school districts and community representatives to re-engage students.

During the 2012–13 school year, only 2 percent of the state's students quit high school, according to *The Boston Globe*. Massachusetts has experienced a decline in its dropout rate for five consecutive years.

Boston launched an initiative in 2002 to address growing dropout rates, including a re-engagement center for students who had quit school, summer school programs and increased opportunities for students to take courses online. These efforts, along with MassGrad, have lowered the city's dropout rate from nearly 10 percent in the 2005–06 school year to just 3.8 percent in 2013–14.

MassGrad is a statewide program funded through a \$15 million, five-year federal grant awarded in 2010.

## Focus on Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative: One State's Approach to Overcoming Poverty

Economists have long identified a significant correlation between higher education attainment, employment and increased wages. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5.4 percent of associate degree holders were unemployed in 2013. Meanwhile, 7.5 percent of job seekers with a high school diploma and 11 percent of high school dropouts were unemployed that year. Additionally, median weekly earnings increased significantly at each level of educational attainment.

It is clear that in an economy with increasing knowledge and skill requirements, education and training are essential to securing a job and a living wage. If the workforce lacks people with the necessary knowledge and skills, businesses do not thrive and economic growth is stymied.

With a population of just under 3 million, Arkansas is a small state that has lingered near the bottom of national rankings for economic growth indicators. Despite recent gains in higher education enrollment and completion, the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2012 that less than half of the state's working age population had achieved some level of postsecondary education or training. As a result, Arkansas was ill-prepared to meet projected workforce demands and was on track to attract only low-skill, low-wage jobs that require no education or training beyond high school and are inadequate to support families or produce sufficient economic returns for the state.

As is the trend nationally, Arkansas' low post-secondary degree attainment rates translate into lower household incomes and higher rates of poverty. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state's median household income is \$40,768, far below the national average and higher than only one other state. Arkansas has the third-highest poverty rate in the U.S. at 19 percent, and has an even higher rate of poverty—41 percent—among female-led households with children. In a 2012 American Community Survey, it was noted among those families in poverty, more than half have a parent who is engaged in work yet not earning enough to escape poverty.

The state's Career Pathways Initiative, or CPI, is a nationally recognized model that targets low-income parents and provides them with intensive case management along with postsecondary education and training.

The initiative, administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, has 25 programs located at 22 community colleges and three university technical centers statewide. This new model is a significant shift from traditional programs serving low-income citizens, which typically focused on cash assistance and moving recipients into low-wage, entry-level jobs requiring no education or training and offering little opportunity for career development or long-term economic sustainability.

The goals of CPI are to provide access to postsecondary education and training, increase credential completion, and increase job attainment and retention. Using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—or TANF—program funds, CPI serves parents or caretakers of children age 21 and younger who meet at least one of the following additional criteria:

- Current recipient of Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, AR Kids 1st or Medicaid assistance;
- Current or former recipient of Transitional Employment Assistance; or
- Earn 250 percent or less of the federal poverty level.

Recognizing the significant challenges many low-income parents face as they enter a college environment, CPI provides a comprehensive set of wraparound case management services. Upon enrollment in the program, students' academic abilities and career interests are assessed and case managers develop individualized plans to help them achieve their goals, monitor their progress, and work closely with other college departments to arrange for tutoring and other support. Case managers also may refer students to external resources to address non-academic barriers that could interfere with their ability to succeed, such as family services or legal assistance.

Additional financial assistance funded through TANF also is available to help eligible students meet such needs as:

- Transportation vouchers;
- Childcare assistance;
- Tuition and fees;
- Books and supplies; and
- Licensing and testing fees required by employers.

To match participants with credentials that qualify them for higher paying jobs in their local area, the state Department of Higher Education evaluated each college's academic catalog and developed career pathway maps that visually demonstrate stackable credentials earned over time, required courses for each credential, the timeframe in which credentials can be completed and entry level jobs and wages for each credential. Case managers use these maps as tools for discussing career requirements and opportunities with participating students.

As a condition for receiving an annual state appropriation of TANF funds, Arkansas policymakers mandated CPI measure and report

on student enrollment, certificate and degree completion, and employment after program completion. CPI administrators have maintained detailed performance records that demonstrate the program's effectiveness.

To date, more than 30,000 CPI students have completed 31,179 credentials including:

- GEDs—514
- Employability certificates and Career Readiness certificates—14,129
- Certificates of Proficiency—5,099
- Technical certificates—5,291
- Associate degrees—5,476
- Industrial and clerical internship certificates of completion—670

Students who complete the program are matched with state Unemployment Insurance data to determine employment attainment and retention. According to enrollment, completion and employment data provided by Arkansas Department of Higher Education and wage data provided by the Arkansas Research Center, 67 percent of CPI students who completed during the 2013 fiscal year entered employment, 86 percent of those retained employment after six months, and 89 percent of those retained employment after 12 months.

Arkansas has undertaken a unique and successful approach to helping those in poverty achieve greater self-sufficiency and financial well-being through education and training that leads to better employment and earned income. Better employment on a career path holds the most potential for being a long-term and permanent solution to poverty for families that suffer its consequences. The Career Pathways Initiative has helped thousands of low-income Arkansans earn education and training credentials, many at the postsecondary level, and enter and maintain employment. CPI is a critical component of the state's workforce development system, providing a very tailored and appropriate approach to educating and training those populations most in need of workforce skills, which every state has and struggles to serve.

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF YOUTH OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Options for states to consider:

- Provide education, employment skills and stable connections to adults that can manage the emotional, physical and social needs of youth transitioning out of foster care.
- Ensure programs and services are offered to youth

transitioning out of foster care that address permanency, health, economic well-being, life skills and housing needs.

- Develop partnerships with business and industry to provide work experience, mentoring and job-shadowing opportunities.
- Enable youth to voluntarily remain in foster care situations after age 18 if they are still enrolled in high school or other community-based programs that typically conclude when the youth reaches age 18.
- Create community-based programs that serve youth in foster care to assist with independent living and movement to postsecondary education and employment.
- Ensure youth in foster care remain in the same school system during a placement change.
- Develop policies requiring confirmation that safe and stable housing is secured before any youth is discharged from foster care.
- Create a seamless partnership between child welfare and other youth-serving systems to ensure that youth transitioning out of foster care have access to comprehensive programs to address their permanency, health, economic, social and housing needs.

## State Snapshot

### Utah Provides Transition Services to Foster Children

Utah's Department of Child and Family Services developed a statewide initiative to provide assistance to youth transitioning out of foster care into independent living services. Transition to Adult Living began in 2003 based on input from youth living in foster care. After hearing feedback from the youth, then-Gov. Olene Walker made this a priority of her administration.

Transition to Adult Living, a collaboration between private and public supporters offers mentoring, career and personal planning, networking opportunities with caregivers and families, life-skills training, character building education and referrals to community programs. Part of the initiative includes a formal partnership with the Utah Department of Workforce Services, giving foster youth priority status for workforce training and programs.

Each youth also undergoes an annual life skill assessment, which provides data on the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to live independently. Other programs include access to safe and affordable housing, mentoring programs to provide sustainable relationships, career preparation training, and physical and mental health services. Youth in foster care also have access to *Just for Youth*, a website providing resources and information on college scholarships, transportation and crisis management information.

### Tennessee Supports Foster Care Children's Transition to Adulthood

In 2013, Tennessee's Department of Children's Services partnered with the Memphis-based nonprofit agency Youth Villages to assist the state's former foster youth in their transition to adulthood. A 2015 study found that youth who took advantage of Youth Villages' services, including regular counseling sessions that address daily tasks normally faced by adults, achieved higher incomes, more stable housing and an improved economic well-being.

The Department of Children's Services, in conjunction with federal programs, has been tasked with assisting children who have aged out of foster care for more than a decade, but substantial lack of funding impeded these efforts until the department established its partnership with Youth Villages.

The program, called YVLifeSet, has assisted nearly 7,500 young people in the transition from foster care to social and financial independence. Participation in the program is voluntary. Trained specialists meet with participants at least once a week at various locations—homes, workplace and community centers. Among the services provided to former foster care and other vulnerable youth ages 17-22 are high school or GED completion, college planning, securing housing, money management skills, and finding and maintaining employment. In addition to these services, YVLifeSet offers potential reconciliation, if possible, between participating youth and approved family members.



# SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS' CONCERNS ▶

## IDENTIFYING VETERANS

Options for states to consider:

- Create a centralized, opt-in database of veterans to be used by states to educate and inform veterans of available opportunities, benefits and programs.
- Develop an interagency veterans' council to collect data from various agencies, including state departments of veterans affairs, motor vehicle, and health and human services, along with any other points of entry to compile data on veterans.
- Utilize a comprehensive database to educate and inform veterans of services, benefits, and opportunities while leveraging technology solutions—such as text message—to reach veterans.

### State Snapshot

#### New Mexico's Efforts to Support a Military Dependent Data Set

New Mexico's Public Education Department is working to establish a Military Dependent Data Set, or MDDS, that tracks students from pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. With the high mobility of military families, these data are critical to address transfer issues as students move from school to school within the state. As part of the department's Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System, or STARS, along with creation of a unique identification number for each student in the state, state officials are able to capture student, staff and course data to inform continuous assessment and monitoring of student achievement and success.

STARS is a comprehensive student, staff and course information collaborative of New Mexico's Public Education Department, public schools, charter schools and the New Mexico State Legislature, providing a standard data set for each student served by New Mexico's Pre-K through grade 12 public education system. The education department maintains a central data warehouse which integrates detailed student, staff and course information provided by the school's local Student Information Systems on a quarterly basis. The state is able to track each student with the use of a unique identification number assigned to students at enrollment.

With the creation of the MDDS, the state will capture student data such as enrollment, assessments, courses, grades, attendance, discipline, groups and programs such as special education and early language learning.

Efforts were underway in early 2015 to address state-to-state mobility through the P20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System (P20W SLDS) and Educational Data Dashboard initiatives. The education department and other state agency partners track 17 data points to help make better informed decisions about best practices, early childhood education, student success, school personnel and teacher development and higher education and workforce outcomes. Military dependents now will be included in all data collection.

## UN- AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT

Options for states to consider:

- Provide veteran preferences for state jobs and contracts, as well as protection of such practices from lawsuits or other negative impacts from citizens who feel this is an unfair support.
- Provide credit for military training, education and experience toward obtaining occupational license or certifications.
- Maintain members of reserve force's occupational license during mobilization, including time to return to work.
- Create state reciprocity to endorse members of the military or spouses' licenses in good standing from another state.
- Provide temporary professional or occupational licenses through state reciprocity to relocating members of the military and spouses for those who are qualified.
- Provide unemployment compensation eligibility to military spouses who separate from employment because of a military move.
- Provide multi-year tiered tax incentives for hiring and/or retaining veterans to ensure retention year over year.

- Ensure employers comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act and protect National Guard members from repercussions due to military-related absence.
- Ensure state contracts include both veteran and National Guard benchmarks for compliance.

## State Snapshot

### Iowa Targets Middle-Skill Jobs

According to a 2013 report from Iowa Workforce Development, 56 percent of the state's jobs in 2012 were middle-skills jobs, those that require more than a high school degree but less than a four-year degree, yet just 33 percent of the workforce possessed middle-skill abilities.

A U.S. Department of Labor grant helped partially fund Elevate Iowa, which is designed to build training capacity in specific programs—such as welding or industrial maintenance—at community colleges across the state. That funding targets specific populations, such as the underemployed, veterans and minorities.

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry also funds Elevate Iowa. Its charge is to promote the idea of career and technical education by targeting children, parents and guidance counselors.

“Our goal at Elevate is really to change the perception of manufacturing,” said Michele Farrell, project manager for Elevate Iowa on behalf of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry. “We love the four-year degree. All manufacturers have front offices with accountants and legal and everything else. We need both. We want people to realize that hey, if that’s not the path for you, you have this option. ... It’s a good option.”

In late September 2014, Farrell said Iowa had more than 6,000 job openings in manufacturing, with an average annual wage of \$51,000. One company needs machinists so badly that it pays people to go through training at a local community college and, if a student earns at least 80 percent on their classwork, they are automatically hired.

## Business Snapshots

### 100,000 Jobs Mission Promotes Employment of Veterans

In 2011, the eleven founding companies of 100,000 Jobs Mission—AT&T Inc., Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., Cisco Systems, Cushman & Wakefield, EMC Corporation, Iron Mountain Incorporated, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Modis, NCR Corporation, Universal Health Services, Inc., and Verizon—came together to overcome the challenges faced by veterans as they looked for civilian employment. Originally, the group had a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. However, by September 2014, 190,046 veterans were successfully employed. Now over 175 companies have joined the coalition and represent nearly every U.S. industry.

The group determined the need for multiple recruitment strategies including job fairs targeting veterans, recruiting on military

bases, job market websites targeted to veterans, specially trained recruiters and messaging to the veteran community.

Benefits to the companies range from a collaborative spirit among the partners, a chance to learn from others committed to hiring veterans, and participating in and sharing of best practices related to common challenges.

### Wal-Mart Increases Hiring of Veterans

Wal-Mart committed in 2013 to hiring 100,000 veterans over a five-year period. At that time, nearly 1 million veterans were unemployed and male veterans age 18–24 had an overall unemployment rate of almost 30 percent.

“Wal-Mart is hiring veterans because it is just the right thing to do,” said Joe Quinn, Wal-Mart’s senior director of issue management and strategic outreach, at the time of the announcement. “Men and women who fight for our country should never have to fight for a job.”

Less than halfway through the five-year hiring timeline, Wal-Mart already has hired more than 77,000 veterans—or 75 percent of its target—including approximately 10,000 employees in Texas alone. The jobs could not arrive soon enough for the Lone Star state.

There were 19,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans in Texas in 2013, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That amounted to an 8.7 percent unemployment rate, well above the average unemployment rate of 6.3 percent for all Texans and also higher than the national unemployment rate of 6.7 percent that same year.

National unemployment rates among veterans decreased last year. The 2014 annual unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans was 7.2 percent, a nearly 2 percent drop from 2013 and a nearly 5 percent decrease from 2011. It was the lowest annual unemployment rate recorded for post-9/11 veterans.

CSG’s private sector members also are seeing the value in training and hiring veterans. Twenty CSG Associates, including Wal-Mart, have been recognized by Victory Media as Military Friendly Employers.

## ENTREPRENEURISM

Options for states to consider:

- Provide similar status for veterans as provided to other protected groups for small business loans and other business assistance.
- Leverage existing small business/entrepreneur initiatives for veterans.
- Create a task force to integrate chambers of commerce, business organizations/associations, workforce development and economic development entities to support and encourage growth in veteran-owned businesses.

## FOCUS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

250K

EACH YEAR, MORE THAN 250,000 SERVICE MEMBERS TRANSITION OUT OF THEM MILITARY.

» U.S. Small Business Association

45 PERCENT OF U.S. VETERANS START THEIR OWN BUSINESSES AFTER COMPLETING THEIR MILITARY SERVICE.

» The Kauffman Foundation

45%

1/10

NEARLY 1 IN 10—OR 2.5 MILLION—SMALL BUSINESSES NATIONWIDE ARE VETERAN-OWNED.

» U.S. Census Bureau

### VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES:

» Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University

EMPLOY MORE THAN  
5.7 MILLION  
PEOPLE



CONTRIBUTE CLOSE TO  
\$1.7 TRILLION  
TO THE U.S. GDP

- Include veteran-owned businesses as a category in state contract set-asides.
- Provide unemployment protection for veteran business owners who are deployed.

### Local Snapshot

#### Syracuse University Offers Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans

Founded in 2007, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University developed the first program focused on the educational, economic, social and policy issues impacting veterans and their families. Boasting an interdisciplinary model, the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans—or EBV—is made up of such postsecondary education institutions as Cornell University, Louisiana State University, University of Connecticut, Purdue, UCLA Anderson, Mays Business School at Texas A&M, Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University and Florida State University.

The consortium was developed to focus on serving military veterans and incorporates three phases for participants—education, job training and support. Phase one is a month-long online course on basic entrepreneurship, along with business strategies and acumen. Phase two consists of entrepreneurship immersion, placing participants with more than 30 experienced entrepreneurs and educators in a nine-day residency program at a bootcamp university site. The program offers more than 80 hours of instruction on the ins and outs of owning a business. The final phase, phase three, involves a year of mentorship and support from the EBV Technical Assistance Program, an intensive and comprehensive network of advisers.

The bootcamp also offers programs and resources in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with service-related disabilities. The program offers the skills development and competencies needed to develop and sustain an entrepreneurial venture. Participants learn what it takes to start and maintain a business with an emphasis on the challenges and opportunities related to veteran business owners.

The bootcamp is offered free to participating veterans. Reports from 2014 show 70 percent of graduates have successfully started their own business.

### ACADEMIC COMPLETION

Options for states to consider:

- Accept credit for military training, education and experience toward academic degree completion through the use of prior learning assessments or experiential credit for military and National Guard members.
- Direct institutions to increase transparency and protect veterans and National Guard members by disclosing policies

on acceptance of credit for service and transfer of credit from other institutions for military members and families.

- Direct institutions to provide flexibility in enrollment and priority registration for student veterans.
- Provide tax credits for public/private partnerships for veteran job and career advancement training and entrepreneurship.
- Ensure institutions comply with federal law for offering active, reserve, veterans, National Guard members and their families' in-state tuition.
- Reduce or waive tuition for veterans who have exhausted their benefits.
- Offer a waiver of fees for professional certificates or licensure for veterans.

## State Snapshot

### Tennessee VETS Act Eases Transition to College

In 2014, Tennessee legislators passed the Tennessee Veterans Education Support Act—or VETS—allowing for veterans to qualify for in-state tuition rates as long as they have not been dishonorably discharged, are eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery Bill benefits, and enroll within two years following discharge. In order to receive in-state tuition, a participating veteran must be enrolled continuously in a higher education program and must demonstrate the intent to become a Tennessee resident by fulfilling two of the following requirements: having a Tennessee driver's license, state motor vehicle registration, proof of employment in the state or other documents clearly establishing state residency.

Additionally, the Tennessee VETS Act certifies certain institutions in the state that have created services designed to ease the transition from military service to college enrollment. In order to qualify for certification, colleges and universities must satisfy seven requirements. Starting with veteran identification via campus surveys, schools must then train faculty and staff in how to deal with potential mental and physical issues that veterans commonly experience.

Once on campus, institutions must conduct orientation programs for incoming veteran students, as well as create mentoring and support groups for them. Schools should develop adequate outreach and communication strategies for local military bases, with an emphasis on determining veterans' educational goals. Finally, schools must create prior learning assessment models that award academic credit for military service and publicize this information on campus websites.

So far, nine Tennessee schools have been VETS-certified: Austin Peay State University, Chattanooga State Community College, Cleveland State Community College, Pellissippi Community College, Tennessee State University, Tennessee Tech University, The University of Memphis, Volunteer State Community College, and Walters State Community College.

# VETERAN STUDENTS

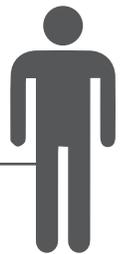


## 500K >>> 1 MILLION

In **2009**, there were approximately 500,000 student veterans receiving education benefits. In **2013**, more than 1,000,000 student veterans used their GI benefits to pursue advanced educational opportunities, and this number is estimated to increase by 20% in the next few years.



21%-27% are female



73%-80% are male

## AGES 24-40

Only 15% of student veterans are traditionally aged college students. Most student veterans are between the ages of 24 and 40.

62% of student veterans are first-generation college students.

## 62%

» U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "Who Are Today's Student Veterans?" <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/studentvets.asp#sthash.ubOJN13Q.dpbs>

## West Virginia Trains National Guard Cyber Warriors

In partnership with the University of Charleston and the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia National Guard provides a mechanism to grow future cyber warriors by providing high-quality, hands-on cybersecurity training and certification courses to its soldiers and airmen.

Students showing a lack of demonstrated information technology skillsets—either through previous formal education, technical courses, certifications or experience—first attend educational courses leading to an associate degree in cybersecurity from the West Virginia Community and Technical College System. This program provides 60 hours of instruction—45 of which are either technical core or specialty courses—with an emphasis on basic information technology and network skills. Students then move to more in-depth cybersecurity topics such as risk, threat, and security assessments and utilizing assessments to develop security policy, business continuity, disaster recovery, and incident response planning. The program also covers security methods, controls and procedures, ethics, laws, and computer forensics. Students also graduate with the knowledge necessary to obtain additional vendor certifications, including CompTIA Network+, CompTIA Security+ and Microsoft Certified System Analyst certifications.

Students completing the Associate of Applied Science degree program or who demonstrate an IT skillset proceed with the Bachelor of Science in cybersecurity degree program with the University of Charleston. This program lets students earn an additional 60 hours of credit that gives them the skills needed to perform cyber vulnerability analysis, network/system penetration testing, cybersecurity policy development and cybersecurity program management.

The Charleston hands-on program also prepares students to earn the International Council of E-Commerce Consultants, also known as EC-Council, Certified Ethical Hacker, Certified Incident Handler, Certified Security Analysis and License Penetration Tester certifications, as well as the ISC2 Certified Information Systems Security Professional and Systems Security Certified Practitioner certifications.

## Focus on Lansing Community College: Assisting Veterans with Health Care Jobs

Michigan has implemented programs to help veterans get through college quickly and back into the civilian workforce. Lisa Ferris McCann, program director for the Veteran Health Care Career Programs at Lansing Community College, said the college began looking in 2001 at how to move veterans quickly into health care jobs.

“We actually were looking at nursing to see if we could move (military) medics into nurses,” she said. “What we discovered was, when we were looking at transcripts and curriculum, is that (nursing) wasn’t really the best fit. We had a much better fit with the military medic to paramedic transition.”

The medic to paramedic program began in 2012 with five students. When veterans enter the program, McCann said, they begin with

three days of competency testing to see what other credits can be awarded.

“We determined that we could apply prior credit to about 40 to 60 percent of the standard paramedic program,” said McCann. “That cut down the military medic’s time (to graduation) to about six months... It has increased our degree completion by about 70 percent at this point.”

McCann said Lansing Community College also has developed a significant support network for veterans, including academic counseling and financial aid advising.

“We’ve done everything we can to make them inclusive into the college culture, because we are aware that there’s a transition process that goes on in the college culture that moves them ... into civilian culture and prepares them for civilian employment,” she said. “We’re very fortunate that we’re able to serve the veterans who have served us.”

## ADVOCACY

Options for states to consider:

- Develop an interagency veteran/military transition council that includes various state agencies, veterans, private industry and business leaders, civic organizations and faith-based institutions. Subcommittees should include education, employment, trade, entrepreneurship, housing, veteran treatment courts, women veterans, community engagement initiatives and fiscal management.
- Direct state oversight councils to initiate programs to educate service providers, educators and employers on veterans’ issues.
- Direct state agencies to identify veterans as part of their contact with the public.
- Create programs focused on long-term financial planning and counseling for those in active duty military and National Guard service to assist in planning and budgeting for new standards of living during deployment.
- Create public/private partnerships to support successful transitions and integration into civilian life post-service or deployment for the National Guard and their families.
- Develop community-based programs offering job-seeking skills to National Guard members and veterans, including resume writing, preparing for an interview and learning to tailor business expectations with current skills and competencies.
- Encourage schools to develop awareness and programming to meet the needs of students whose parents are deployed.
- Support Jobs for America’s Graduates, or JAG, programs in high schools and develop initiatives to have JAG programs continue into community colleges.

## HOUSING

Options for states to consider:

- Provide property tax credits to veterans.
- Direct a legislative study to reduce the homeless veteran population and support mortgages, mortgage services and assistance to veterans while utilizing civic and nonprofit organizations, combined with private industry, to resolve housing challenges.
- Leverage state and federal grants to revitalize neighborhoods and house homeless veterans.
- Focus housing/shelter initiatives to support women veterans.

### Federal Snapshot

#### Homeless Veterans Access Vouchers for Housing

A partnership between the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs is working to end homelessness among military veterans. The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program uses Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for veterans involved in clinical programs and case management services by the VA in community-based outreach programs. Since 2008, 10,000 vouchers have been awarded annually, with a total of nearly 70,000 veterans receiving awards for permanent housing across the country since the program's inception.

Veterans use the vouchers to rent privately owned housing in their local communities. Service members also receive health care treatment and support services through programs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Case managers from the VA also work with homeless veterans as they seek and maintain sustainable housing as part of their case management program.

Through the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing program, the local public housing authority pays a housing subsidy directly to the rental property owner or landlord on behalf of the veteran. Any difference in monthly rent between what is subsidized and actual cost is paid by the veteran.

Those included in the program are the most vulnerable veterans, with services provided for women veterans, those returning from combat and veterans with disabilities. Ideal candidates for the program require case management services, including those with mental health concerns, substance abuse disorders or a physical disability. All services come under the recovery goals for participating service members as they return to civilian life. Veterans are expected to participate in services provided by the VA in the community and engage in treatment recommendations and support programs needed to manage their recovery.

## FACTS ABOUT VETERANS AND HOUSING

# 62,619

Veterans are homeless on any night, and more than twice as many stay in a homeless shelter or transitional housing over the course of a year.

# 1 IN 6

Veterans are overrepresented in the nation's homeless population. While around one in ten adults is a veteran, one out of every six homeless adults is a veteran.

## MORE THAN HALF

More than half of veterans using VA homeless assistance programs have been homeless for longer than a year.

Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan are entering homelessness more quickly after discharge than veterans from other eras.

» National Housing Conference and the Center for Housing Policy. "Veterans Permanent Supportive Housing: Policy and Practice." May 2013. <http://www.nhc.org/media/files/VeteransPermanentSupportiveHousing.pdf>



# SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUNGER AND NUTRITION ▶

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Options for states to consider:

- Develop public/private partnerships with community extension offices and departments of public health to provide informational materials on healthy and thrifty meals.
- Develop statewide healthy food campaigns through departments of public health, using tools such as nutritional education to employees, wellness programs, tax incentives and working with insurance companies to incentivize healthy behaviors through premium discounts.
- Educate children and families about healthy food choices and cooking by establishing aggressive, practical marketing campaigns managed by a designated state agency and centered on physical activity and nutrition.
- Inform communities about U.S. Department of Agriculture nutritional requirements through MyPlate to help consumers make healthy food choices.
- Review current state laws and regulations, including procurement policies, to identify and remove barriers that prevent the use and distribution of local surplus food from farms, grocery stores and restaurants to address food insecurity needs.
- Incentivize stores to sell nutritious foods in order to eliminate or reduce food deserts.
- Encourage farmers markets, urban, community and school gardens, and ensure state law allows for students to eat food grown in school-based gardens and/or the use of locally grown products by schools.
- Create incentives for the development of urban, community and school gardens that use vacant or public lands.
- Review state and local policy to address land use issues related to school and community gardens that use vacant or public lands, as well as regulations of farmers markets that might inhibit their proliferation.
- Provide incentives for mobile food markets to offer convenient, affordable, healthy foods in underserved areas.
- Ensure universal acceptance of electronic benefit transfer, or EBT, cards for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.
- Provide more flexibility to reduce restrictions on summer SNAP programs and expand successful pilot programs.
- Incentivize SNAP and EBT use at farmers markets through reimbursement and increasing purchase power.
- Take advantage of federal SNAP-Ed funding, which provides up to a 50 percent reimbursement.
- Coordinate with local and state level social service agencies to minimize barriers to SNAP participation.
- Encourage community developments and redevelopments to include healthy food retail to increase access to healthy options by reducing density of fast-food restaurants and increasing access to healthy foods in new and redeveloping areas.
- Undertake initiatives to make fruits and vegetables more affordable options in areas where people live and incentivize food retailers to provide healthy options.
- Conduct a food mapping assessment to identify food deserts and determine need for intervention through program or policy change at the most appropriate—local or state—level.
- Provide incentives to promote healthy food market development in underserved areas through grant or loan programs, tax-increment-financing strategies, or small business or economic development programs, including public-private partnerships that can leverage funds to invest in the development of healthy food retail.
- Encourage the state department of agriculture or local and tribal governments to apply for funding or technical assistance through the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative to address local food deserts.
- Develop outreach and marketing programs to ensure those eligible for programs and services are aware of the benefits for which they qualify.

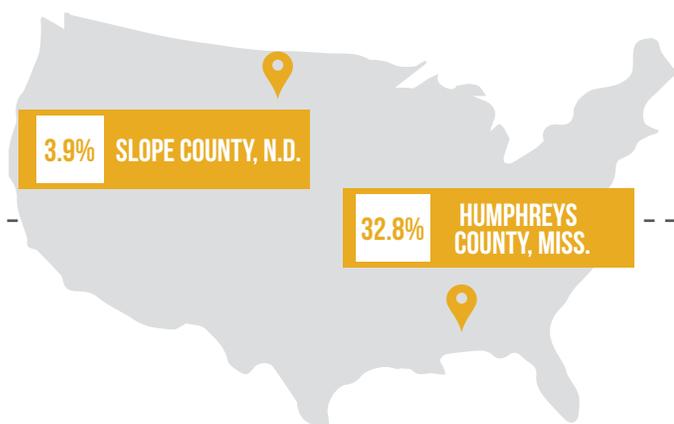
# FOOD INSECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES

MORE THAN **48.9 MILLION** AMERICANS  
are without reliable access to a sufficient quantity  
of affordable, nutritious food.

**32%**  
ARE CHILDREN

**27%**  
ARE INELIGIBLE FOR  
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

## FOOD INSECURITY RATES ACROSS THE U.S.



**59.1%** OF THE COUNTIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATES  
OF CHILD FOOD INSECURITY ARE RURAL.

» Feeding America, "Map the Meal Gap," 2014

## State Snapshots

### New York City Offers Health Bucks

Since 2006, low-income residents in New York City have been able to use Health Bucks to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. A \$2 paper voucher is earned each time a customer spends \$5 from their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, electronic benefit transfer card for fresh produce. In 2013, more than \$260,000 Health Bucks were distributed at 51 farmers markets. Health Bucks is a program of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that the use of EBT cards increased at farmers markets that participated in the Health Bucks program.

### New York Fund Puts Markets in Underserved Communities

The New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund was established to facilitate the development of healthy food markets in underserved communities across the state. Through the program, grocers are eligible for grants and loans for new or expanded stores in designated underserved areas. With funding from Goldman Sachs, the program created a toolkit for grocers seeking strategies to promote healthy eating.

## Local Snapshots

### Healthy Food Retail Included in Communities

For the redevelopment of the old low-income housing area known as Park DuValle in Louisville, Ky., federal grants and tax credit financing totaling more than \$4.4 million made including a grocery feasible. The market, which opened in 2012, has brought 40 permanent jobs to the neighborhood and fresh produce to a neighborhood that had not had a full-service supermarket for more than a decade.

## SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

Options for states to consider:

- Distribute information on healthy, thrifty meals to elementary and secondary students and their families.
- Ensure school policies are developed in healthy and nutritious eating for K-12 schools to ensure students are focused on learning the skills necessary for a strong and healthy future workforce.
- Consider school partnerships with private industry by creating the space for more public/private partnerships to promote healthy nutritious lifestyles.
- Change state laws to allow students to eat the food they

grow by offering incentives for community and school gardens, reduce land use concerns, increase education programs and offer incentives for seeds and tools.

- Encourage districts to leverage federal school nutritional programs to ensure children are not hungry during the school day.
- Require participation in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision to provide school meals for eligible schools and districts.
- Require state agencies to collaborate and share data to eliminate redundant paperwork so students receive eligible benefits.
- For schools that do not currently qualify for the federal breakfast program, provide funding to offer nutritious meals in schools that have a high percentage of low-income students.
- Develop and/or replicate best-practices to increase participation in breakfast and lunch programs, including offering breakfast in the classroom, providing grab-and-go meals and eliminating a separate line for free/reduced lunch.
- Raise awareness about school food pantries and consider funding summer meal and weekend food backpack programs to combat meal gaps among children reliant on school meals.
- Encourage all schools to follow guidelines in the new Smart Snacks in School regulations, part of the Healthy, Hungry-Free Kids Act, for nutrition standards on food and beverages in school meals and sold outside the lunchroom.
- Review the need for nutritional standards for food and drink given to children in licensed public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, outside-school-hours care centers and other institutions licensed or approved to provide day care services.
- Encourage participation in Farm-to-School programs.
- Remove barriers posed by requirements by departments of education and agriculture to use food by the "best when sold by" date, which can prevent access to local food.

## State Snapshot

### West Virginia Feed to Achieve

Childhood hunger in West Virginia is more prevalent today than ever.

More than 1 in 5 West Virginia children live in a household that does not have sufficient access to food. Sixty percent of school-aged children in the state qualify for free or reduced-priced school meals, totaling 173,383 children whose family household income is below or nearly below the federal poverty level. Meals provided at school often are the only nutritious meals children may receive in a day. Without adequate access to food, these children are at risk

for health problems, obesity, nutrient deficiencies, and difficulties with learning and discipline—problems that may have life-long effects.

To address the issue of childhood hunger throughout the state, the West Virginia Legislature passed the West Virginia Feed to Achieve bill in April 2013. The bill, sponsored by Sen. John R. Unger and signed into law by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, focuses on improving the nutrition, physical activity and health of West Virginia's children. The impetus for the bill was simple: every child needs nutritious meals in order to achieve his or her potential. Through the act, school-age children throughout the state will receive the nutritious meals their growing bodies require in order to succeed in life.

West Virginia is the first state in the nation to enact into law a bill that puts children's health and nutrition in the forefront of education. Research demonstrates that students who participate in school breakfast show improvements in attendance, positive behavior, standardized achievement test scores and decreases in tardiness. The Feed to Achieve Act realigned breakfast delivery with the instructional day, giving every student the chance to eat a school breakfast. With this law, the legislature recognized the connection between student health and academic success.

All public schools are required to implement innovative breakfast delivery strategies that provide students with a minimum of two nutritious meals per day and, when feasible, at no cost to the student. Full implementation of these strategies began with the 2015 school year and include, but are not limited to, the following programs:

- Grab-N-Go Breakfasts are meals that are prepared then packaged individually in ready-to-go bags. The students may pick up their bagged breakfast and then consume these meals in the setting of their school's choosing.
- Breakfast in the Classroom allows students the opportunity to eat together in a classroom setting. Students eat breakfast at their desks during the first 10 to 15 minutes of the school day.
- Breakfast After First is served following the first instructional period or during a dedicated nutrition break.

## POLICY AND BENEFITS

Options for states to consider:

- Encourage incentives and bonuses for SNAP participants to purchase nutritious food.
- Encourage the federal government to allow states to restrict the purchase of less-healthy, less-nutritious foods with SNAP benefits through minimally burdensome methods for retailers. States could use WIC guidelines or current taxable/nontaxable food distinctions already in place in many states.

- Consider the development of a nonpartisan task force including a broad coalition of public-private stakeholders to focus on hunger and nutrition baseline measurements, review current policies and programs, set measurable goals, recommend policies and measure progress.

## State Snapshots

### States Provide Incentives for Healthy Food Markets

Pennsylvania blazed the trail in 2004 when it created the Fresh Food Financing initiative and seeded it with \$30 million in state funds, which leveraged an additional \$145 million in public and private financing. Nearly 90 new and expanded fresh food retail outlets have been funded since then, accounting for 5,000 jobs and increasing access to healthful food for 500,000 people. California, Illinois, New Jersey and New York have adopted similar programs, while Virginia is poised to do the same, perhaps as early as 2015.

### Massachusetts Provides Match for Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Purchases

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$31 million in grants in March 2015 to help federal food assistance recipients increase their purchase and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Many farmers markets already have adopted measures to allow customers to use Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) electronic benefit transfer cards. In Massachusetts, the Department of Transitional Assistance provides a dollar-for-dollar match for each SNAP dollar spent on certain fruits and vegetables bought directly from farmers.

## Local Snapshot

### Memphis Food Market Offers Services to Low-Income Residents

The Green Machine Mobile Food Market is a community volunteer effort to provide healthful food and health education services to 50,000 low-income residents of Memphis, Tenn. The idea of a bus loaded with fresh food that goes directly to shoppers has sparked international interest and the Society Against Poverty and Hunger is working on replicating the program in Nigeria. The food bus is the brainchild of Kenneth Reardon, director of the graduate program of City and Regional Planning at the University of Memphis, which to date has been funded privately through area organizations, corporations and individuals.

## COMMUNITY-BASED NUTRITION EDUCATION

Options for states to consider:

- Consider development of public/private partnerships and coordinate with community extension offices and public health departments to provide information on healthy and thrifty meals.
- Consider development of statewide healthy food campaigns through departments of public health, using tools such as nutritional education to employees, wellness programs, tax incentives and working with insurance companies to incentivize healthy behaviors through premium discounts.
- Educate children and families about healthy food choices and food preparation.





# SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES ▶

The Council of State Governments' Justice Center, <http://csgjusticecenter.org/>, is active on the frontlines of public policy promoting data-driven and consensus-based solutions to today's most challenging public safety problems. Created in 2006, the CSG Justice Center serves all states through research and direct technical assistance focused on cross-systems strategies for effective and lasting policy outcomes.

The CSG Justice Center is a recognized national leader on a number of critical policy issues, including school discipline, responses to people with mental illnesses who are involved with the criminal justice system, justice reinvestment to better protect and strengthen our communities, and offender re-entry.

Since 2009, the CSG Justice Center has housed the National Reentry Resource Center. The National Reentry Resource Center serves as a primary source of information and guidance in re-entry, advancing the use of evidence-based practices and policies and creating a network of practitioners, researchers and policymakers invested in reducing recidivism. A driving theme of CSG's re-entry work has been overcoming barriers to employment for offenders.

Working in tandem with CSG's State Pathways to Prosperity Initiative, the CSG Justice Center is facilitating national conversations on how the public and private sectors can work collaboratively to tackle the growing challenge of employment for people with criminal records. Through these national dialogues between local, state and federal leaders, the CSG Justice Center is working not only to identify best practices and proven policy options that may be replicated in other states, but also to change how policymakers think about the role of the criminal justice system when it comes to workforce development and employment.

## EMPLOYMENT AND PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS

It's estimated that some 65 million people in America have a criminal record. Regardless of the seriousness of their crime—whether it was a violent crime or the lowest-level property or drug offense—nearly all of these people are forever burdened with a criminal record that a prospective employer can discover with a simple background check or even a Google search. Employment can play a critical role in reducing recidivism and improving

other long-term outcomes for people who have been involved with the criminal justice system, yet people with criminal records face a multitude of barriers to employment. Understanding and addressing these challenges—and attacking the overall problem of unemployment, especially in urban areas—requires the collaboration of employers, the workforce development field, and policymakers at every level of government.

To facilitate this collaboration, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center has initiated a range of efforts to encourage public/private dialogues about this pressing issue, promote best practices from the reentry and workforce development field, and to support policymakers who are eager to address the legal barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

### White House Event



In June 2014, the White House hosted "Pathways to Prosperity: How Public and Private Sectors Can Put People with Criminal Records to Work," a vigorous roundtable discussion between policymakers and business leaders focused on how to improve employment outcomes for people with

criminal records. Organized by the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, and the National Reentry Resource Center, and moderated by U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, the event convened state and federal policymakers, heads of top nonprofits, leaders from the corrections and workforce development fields, and executives from companies such as Home Depot and the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System.

Following the event, Tennessee Senate Majority Leader and CSG Chairman Mark Norris called on all states to convene business leaders and hold similar conversations, using the White House meeting as a model. "This is just the kind of private-public sector dialogue we need to design strategies that are good for business and put people who are now law-abiding citizens to work," said Norris.

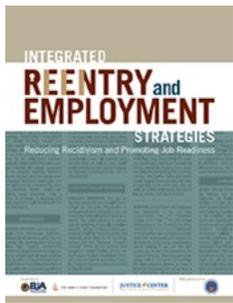
## Momentum Building Across the Country

As a result of the call to action issued at the White House event, similar events have been held in cities across the country to continue the conversation about removing barriers to employment for people with criminal records. These local gatherings have taken place in Washington, DC, Atlanta (GA), Indianapolis (IN), Los Angeles (CA), Memphis (TN), Greenville (SC), and Detroit (MI), and have involved organizations including local chambers of commerce, reentry task forces, workforce development service providers, and public safety agencies, and businesses ranging from the Courtyard Marriott, UPS, and Michelin to local farms, manufacturers, and bakeries.

In May, the CSG Justice Center and the Legal Action Center co-hosted the Southern Regional Summit on Fair Hiring in Atlanta. More than 100 policymakers, business representatives, and community service providers from seven southern states came together to discuss fair hiring policies, standards for hiring, and innovative partnerships to improve employment outcomes for people with criminal records.

## Piloting Innovative Approaches in Milwaukee (WI) and Palm Beach (FL) Counties

Not long after the White House Pathways to Prosperity event, two cities were chosen to test concepts outlined in Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness, a publication released by the CSG Justice Center in 2013. Supported by the U.S. Department of



Justice, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Labor, the CSG Justice Center began providing technical assistance to Milwaukee and Palm Beach counties to assess the risk and job-readiness levels of the target population, evaluate the employment services available to them, and determine to how well they are being matched to the services that can help prepare them for employment.

## Policy Developments at the State Level

Each year, more states are considering policy changes to address the problem of employment for people with criminal records. As of July 2015, 18 states across the country had adopted “fair hiring” policies that barred the inclusion of conviction history from public sector job applications, with some states going further to require the same for private sector job applications. States whose policies encompassed public sector employment include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Vermont, and Virginia, while Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Rhode Island have policies related to both public and private sector employment.

# STATES BAN THE BOX

Across the country, **18 STATES AND MORE THAN 100 CITIES AND COUNTIES** have created policies to ensure an employer considers a job candidate’s qualifications first, rather than the applicant’s criminal record. Commonly known as “ban-the-box” protections, these policies remove the criminal history check box from job applications and delay criminal background checks until later in the hiring process, providing job-seekers more confidence that their skills and competencies receive equal review. The following states have adopted state ban-the-box policies for public employees.

Seven of these states—Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Rhode Island—have extended those protections to private employers, as well.

## 18 STATES HAVE ADOPTED BAN-THE-BOX POLICIES FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES:

CALIFORNIA	ILLINOIS	NEW MEXICO
COLORADO	MARYLAND	OHIO
CONNECTICUT	MASSACHUSETTS	OREGON
DELAWARE	MINNESOTA	RHODE ISLAND
GEORGIA	NEBRASKA	VERMONT
HAWAII	NEW JERSEY	VIRGINIA

» National Employment Law Project, July 1, 2015

Other policies being tested at the state level attempt to limit an employers’ ability to consider certain criminal convictions, to increase access to occupational licensing and certificates of rehabilitation for people with criminal records, and providing tax incentives and no-cost liability bonds to employers to promote employment of people with criminal records.

## Looking Ahead

Local public/private dialogues among businesses, workforce development agencies, and policymakers will take place in Yonkers (NY), Birmingham (AL), Grand Rapids (MI), Milwaukee (WI), and Topeka (KS). The Midwest Regional Summit on Fair Hiring is expected to be held in Chicago, IL in fall of this year. The CSG Justice Center is also partnering with national organizations

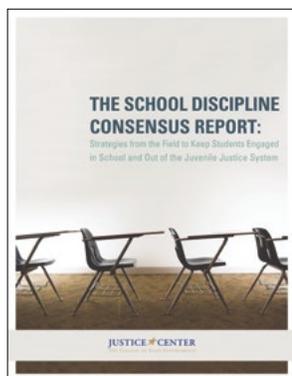
and state and local leaders and business associations to develop resources and guidance for businesses and policymakers to promote employment for people with criminal records.

Initial findings from the analysis conducted in Milwaukee and Palm Beach counties will be discussed with key local stakeholders and federal partners in September, along with strategies to engage the business community and workforce development service providers to promote better employment and other outcomes for people with criminal records.

## SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Millions of middle and high school students are being suspended or expelled each year, overwhelmingly for minor misconduct, and a disproportionate percentage of these students are youth of color. When removed from the classroom, these students are at a significantly higher risk of falling behind academically, dropping out of school, and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system.

### *The School Discipline Consensus Project*



The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center led the national School Discipline Consensus Project, a three-year undertaking that convened hundreds of experts in fields including school safety, behavioral health, education, juvenile justice, social services, law enforcement, and child welfare. Youth, parents, community partners, and state and local policymakers also participated in the project.

Released in July 2014 at events in Austin, TX and Los Angeles, CA, the resulting report—*The School Discipline Consensus Report*—draws on practical, field-tested strategies and supporting research to promote multidisciplinary approaches to keep students engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

“It’s a vision directly from the field about how to move beyond the old way of thinking and establish a variety of proven systems that can fit within any given district with its own unique set of challenges,” Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris said on the release of the report.

Participating in the release events for the report were Dean of the Texas State Senate John Whitmire, who also chaired the School Discipline Consensus Project, Senator Norris, Texas Chief Justice Nathan Hecht and Texas Commissioner of Education Michael Williams; school district superintendants from Los Angeles, Fresno, and Vallejo, California; and Major Cities Chiefs of Police Association Executive Director Darrel Stephens and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.

Developed under the federal Supportive School Discipline Initiative, the report’s recommendations focus on helping schools assess their approach to school discipline, climate, and safety, and to develop data collection and tracking practices to measure the effectiveness of their efforts in these areas.

The School Discipline Consensus Project builds on a two-year study conducted by the CSG Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University that tracked nearly a million public school students in Texas over a six-year period and culminated in the 2011 publication of the groundbreaking *Breaking Schools’ Rules* report.

### *Changing How States and Local School Districts Approach School Discipline*

Momentum for change has been building across the country since the release of *The School Discipline Consensus Report*. California enacted comprehensive reforms and policy changes addressing school discipline, while states including Connecticut, Indiana, and Vermont passed legislation related to school discipline and Georgia, North Carolina, and Washington have established legislative task forces or advocacy coalitions to tackle the issue of school discipline.

At the school district level, cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Syracuse have made significant changes to school discipline policies, while other cities including Oakland, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Denver are testing alternative approaches to discipline in an effort to reduce the number of students who are suspended from school, and ultimately improve attendance and graduation rates as a result.

States and school districts across the country have demonstrated progress in reducing student suspensions.<sup>1</sup> Colorado, for example, reduced out-of-school suspensions by 17 percent from 2011–12 to 2013–14, and California saw a 15-percent reduction from 2012–13 to 2013–14.<sup>2</sup> Between 2010–11 and 2012–13, student suspensions in New York City dropped 27 percent.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of viable, publicly reported school discipline and climate data continues to be a challenge nationwide. Of the 41 states that publicly report some school discipline data, only 22 provide information on the number of students suspended every year, and only 17 provide suspension and expulsion data that is disaggregated by race. The CSG Justice Center continues to promote state and local efforts to evaluate school discipline practices and collect the data necessary to assess the impact of those practices on student outcomes.

1. While researchers and advocates have highlighted these successes, they have also noted that reductions in suspensions and expulsions have not necessarily changed racial disparities in discipline.
2. Padres & Jovenes Unidos. *The 2nd Annual Colorado School Discipline Report Card*. (Denver: Padres & Jovenes Unidos, 2015). Available at [http://padresunidos.org/sites/www.padresunidos.org/files/media-root/ES2JT/PJU-01\\_Report2015\\_web%20v2%204\\_6\\_15.pdf](http://padresunidos.org/sites/www.padresunidos.org/files/media-root/ES2JT/PJU-01_Report2015_web%20v2%204_6_15.pdf); California Department of Education. *State Schools Chief Tom Torlakson Reports Significant Drops in Suspensions and Expulsions for Second Year in a Row*. News release, January 14, 2015. Available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr15/yr15rel5.asp>.
3. New York Civil Liberties Union. *Student Safety Act Reporting on Suspensions*. (New York: NYCLU, 2014). Available at [http://www.nyclu.org/files/ssa\\_suspension\\_factsheet\\_2013-2014\\_edit.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/ssa_suspension_factsheet_2013-2014_edit.pdf)

## A LOOK FORWARD AND BEYOND ► WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris,  
2014 CSG National Chair

The “train and pray” education and employment policies of the past no longer work. Anticipating the needs of business and industry requires learning to look beyond, not at, the horizon.

CSG is working to harness and translate the data that drives governments’ ability to focus accurately on the future. Accurate data is essential to sustain a successful economic development effort; useful metrics are necessary to measure success. States compete for jobs and governments compete for scarce resources needed to drive economic opportunity. Those who understand this and are able to maximize the right opportunities will maintain it. Those who don’t will falter. In other words, it is in the best interest of everyone to maintain a long-term commitment to building the best workforce in the world.

Building a stronger economy—one that consists of a skilled workforce, declining unemployment and increasing gross domestic product—will require a sustained effort, such as an ongoing CSG workforce development and education program designed to assist and benefit state governments. Not only must this effort be content rich for teaching purposes, but it also should provide cost-saving services to states and to individual policymakers alike.

Success won’t be certain for some time, but sometimes it’s hard to see history in the making when you’re in the midst of making it.

Whether the United States rises to the challenge and fully embraces the manufacturing renaissance now underway remains to be seen. I suspect we will, and CSG will be an important player in it.

Get involved. Ask the hard questions. See to it that your curricula are relevant and that institutions of higher learning are properly incentivized and funded to graduate citizens with the aptitude, attitude and skills necessary to work, earn and learn in the 21st century.

## CONTRIBUTORS ▶

“A Framework for State Policymakers: Developing Pathways to Ensure a Skilled Workforce for State Prosperity” was written by Pam Goins of The Council of State Governments based on work of the National Task Force on Workforce Development and Education. Special thanks goes to the CSG Policy and Research; Development; and Membership, Marketing and Media teams for providing helpful information and valuable reviews of this report.

Engaging stakeholder organizations and CSG Associate members who represent many private sector industries was critical to the holistic approach of the State Pathways to Prosperity initiative. CSG appreciates the following partners who contributed both resources and information to support this important undertaking.

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Microsoft Corporation  
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital  
Toyota  
Walmart

## ABOUT CSG ▶

Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments (CSG) is our nation’s only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. This offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships.

For more information about CSG, please visit [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org).



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