

MAKING BETTER WORK



February 9, 2022

Gōng xǐ fā cái!

Wishing you health, happiness, and a 2022 worthy of the [Tiger's roar](#).

The [Great Resignation](#) proceeds apace. Or [does it](#)? Will COVID bring a new [normal](#)? As state and local communities launch once-in-a-generation recovery strategies, infrastructure investments, and workforce initiatives, making sense of labor markets is crucial. That starts with workforce data, an understanding of what interventions most help workers in different circumstances advance in work, and knowledge of how to connect local talent to good jobs and careers in their communities—or remotely.

The challenges we face in recovery are complex. But we've been preparing for them by building connected data systems and partnerships that help make meaning of what we learn. Now is the time to put these assets to work. Let us know how we can help you succeed and share your stories so others might build on your knowledge, process, or code.

This month we're sharing a mix of resources—some provide useful evidence for action, and others point toward broader labor market shifts in our (almost?) post-COVID Future of Work. Let us know what you'd like to see more of or how we might generate collective wisdom during our convenings that you could apply in your home states.

You may have noticed our new hue. We hope you love it as much as we do. We'll be learning how to use it in the coming months. You can help by letting us know when things look amiss.

Goings-On in Workforce, Data & Data Viz!

Conferences and events are returning in force. Whether online, in-person, or some combination, we can't wait to see you. Save room in your calendar for the [We All Count](#) Data Equity workshop we're planning for WDQI friends and family in early May. Until then, these events should keep you learning a bunch.

- **WDQI February Convening**, featuring US Department of Labor (DOL) Data Ninjas Christina Eckenroth and Cesar Villanueva, who are leading the charge to bring performance data to the interwebs! Join us for an early demo of [DOL's new tools](#), February 24, 2022.
- **National Skills Coalition Skills Summit** (Online), Washington, DC, February 15-17, 2022. [Register](#).
- **Open Data Week 2022**, New York, NY (& Online), March 5-13, 2022. [Register](#).
- **Frontiers of Social Innovation**, Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR, Online), March 22-24, 2022. [Register](#).
- **Data for Public Good Symposium**, Ann Arbor, MI (& Online), March 24-25, 2022. [Register](#).
- **Innovation@Work**, London, UK (& Online!), March 28-31, 2022. [Register](#).
- **ASU+GSV**, San Diego, April 4-6, 2022. [Register](#).
- **NAWB Forum**, Washington, DC, April 11-14, 2021. [Register](#).

- **Code for America Summit**, Washington, DC (& Online), May 17-18, 2022. Call for proposals through February 10, 2022. [Register](#).
- **Good Tech Fest**, May 17-18, 2022 (Online). Call for speakers and registration information is [here](#).
- **JFF's Horizons** event, New Orleans, June 7-8, 2022. [More information](#).

Now Hiring!

(You too? Send us your best openings, and we'll share them!)

- **Data & Society** still needs a Director of Research! Other mind-blowingly great positions also on offer. [Refer great people](#).
- **GovLab** still needs Research Fellows! [Refer great people](#).
- **Ideas42** needs science-steeped storytelling chops, amongst other talents in demand. [Refer great people](#).
- **JFF** is looking for talent for 20 positions! All over the country! [Refer great people](#).
- **Luminary Labs** needs a Director for its Future of Work and Education portfolio. Nine other fabulous positions await. [Refer great people](#).
- **Mathematica** is looking for researchers in multiple domains to work in locations ranging from Princeton to Ann Arbor to Oakland to Seattle—over 300 positions altogether! [Refer great people](#).
- **National Fund for Workforce Solutions** is looking for a champion to manage evaluation and learning. [Refer great people](#).
- **National Skills Coalition** is looking to fill five terrific positions—a state policy analyst among them! [Refer great people](#).
- **Upjohn Institute** is still looking for a Senior Director of Regional Economic and Community Development—and a Senior Researcher! [Refer great people](#).
- **Urban Institute** is looking to fill 41 positions—many in research, equity, and turning data into action. [Refer great people](#).

#ICYMI - GRANTS

- You've probably seen the new **DOL Grants** page, but if not, we've got you covered. It's [right here](#) and even offers a preview of coming opportunities.
- **National Governors Association** has launched an [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\) Implementation Resources](#) page to help states navigate the law and program and funding streams--many of which have workforce (& workforce data!) implications. If your team does not have a clear post-WDQI path to sustainability, this resource might give you some ideas.
- National Science Foundation's **Future of Work at the Human-Technology Frontier** Core Research Program (FW-HTF) is accepting proposals through March 2, 2022 (\$30M, 40 awards). [More](#). NSF is also looking for nominations for Convergence Accelerator (Future of Work is a current one). [More](#).

Again we wish you a happy, healthy start to the new year and (tiger's) roar worthy of 2022. We are honored to support you in helping each other succeed.

Keep [taking care](#) of each other out there. [Phil](#) says we're in for [more](#).

♥ + Data

Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff), Editor

Dallas Oberlee, Ben Mahrer & the SPR Support Team

Data & Evidence at Work



PATHWAYS TO WORK
Evidence Clearinghouse

What Works During Economic Recessions and Recoveries?

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released this brief to help agencies and programs design solutions that meet the needs of our current recovery environment. It highlights the results of a literature scan and meta-analysis of relevant resources cataloged in the [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse](#).

 [pathwaystowork.acf.hh...](#)



Evidence-Based Policymaking: What Agencies Can Learn from Implementation Science + Integrated Data Systems

This paper demonstrates how the core concepts from two emerging fields—Implementation Science (IS) and Integrated Data Systems (IDS)—can help human service agencies and their partners advance evidence-based policymaking. While decidedly academic, the paper's description of IDS and its challenges—including governance—may help you frame communications with new technical and research partners.

 [link.springer.com](#)



Can Connections Between Data Systems Propel Economic Recovery? Three States Say Yes.

Over the last year, policymakers in Alabama, Florida, and Connecticut have coordinated their efforts across policymaking bodies and key government agencies to help individuals in their states make sense of credentials so people with skills and employers with needs could find each other more effectively.

 [forbes.com](#)



Five Ways Data Can Make the American Rescue Plan Work for Everyone

We can learn much from the early implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), including the role that data, evidence, and evaluation has played in the use of those funds. The Results for America team offers five recommendations for decision-makers at state and local levels and within Tribal or territorial governments for making smart recovery investments going forward. A [podcast](#) and [comprehensive evidence dashboard](#) accompany the post.

 [results4america.mediou...](#)

Build your data capacity.

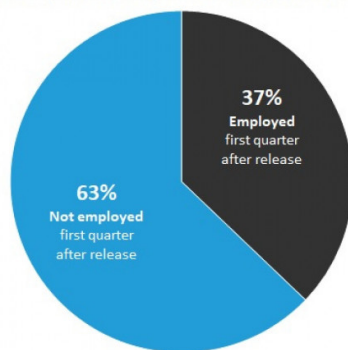
EXPLORE THE
RESOURCE LIBRARY

Data.org's New Resource Library

Most regular readers will be familiar with Data.org. If you are not one of them, now is the time to meet this community. Supported by the [Rockefeller Foundation](#), the [Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth](#), and others, Data.org has become an important platform for data scientists and practitioners, civic tech champions, nonprofit data-centric organizations, and others interested in using data for social good. The launch of the new resource library means you can access 120 tools on topics from data strategy to project scoping to governance—developed by multiple organizations in the network—all in one place. You are welcome.

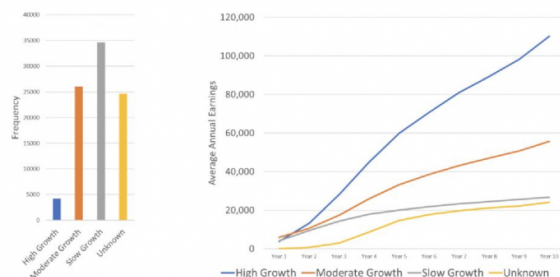
 data.org

New WDQI Products & Initiatives



North Carolina: A Paycheck Is a Pathway Out of Prison

Our own Andrew Berger-Gross summarizes findings from **North Carolina's** new study of the impact of employment on recidivism. Using data from the North Carolina Common Follow-up System—supported by WDQI—Andrew and his team showed that individuals who find work after exiting prison return to prison at a significantly lower rate than their non-employed counterparts, leading to higher earning and better outcomes. #DataViz included in the post and full paper. Congrats North Carolina!



New Jersey: Applied Data Analytics Course Leads to Five New Working Papers

In 2021, a team of data analysts from **New Jersey**, together with colleagues from other states, participated in the [Coleridge Initiative's Applied Data Analytics](#) virtual course to gain real-world experience in data analytics through big data tools such as SQL and R, linking administrative records, and developing data visualizations. The team produced a collection of five working papers on the employment outcomes of participants in post-secondary education and training

Colorado Workforce
Development Council

Colorado's Eighth Annual Talent Pipeline Report

Released in late December, **Colorado's** new Talent Pipeline Report identifies areas of growing demand and opportunity, key features of the current labor force, and strategies to better balance talent supply and demand and grow high-wage jobs in growing industries. It also highlights pandemic data and recovery strategies and provides data-informed recommendations to enhance the talent pipeline throughout the state.



A Value-Driven Approach to Building Data Infrastructure: The MidWest Collaborative

This [Harvard Data Science Review](#) features our own Jessica Cunningham (**Kentucky**) and George Putnam (**Illinois**), together with Anna Hui (**Missouri**) and Julia Lane (Coleridge Initiative) describing the MidWest Data Collaborative's approach to building data infrastructures around state and local needs. Authors offer context, identify the specific actions taken to date, and provide a compelling blueprint for [similar partnerships](#) emerging in other areas.



Building Equity + Inclusion into WIOA Data Systems

The recorded webinar, transcript, and accompanying materials from our January LEAD Center + WDQI joint convening are now available on the LEAD Center website. The webinar focused on how to build equity into data systems so they can inform better programming and higher quality research, and help build more inclusive cultures in agencies and workplaces alike. It featured Dr. Jessica Cunningham, Executive Director of



The COVID-19 Education + Workforce Challenge

This brief summarizes lessons shared by WDQI teams during our November WDQI + SLDS joint convening in November 2021 on state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar recording and slide deck are also available. Many thanks to Mark Duey and Kevan Fish (**Colorado** Department of Labor and Employment); George Putnam and Patti Schnoor (**Illinois** Department of Employment Security and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic

the **Kentucky** Center for Statistics (KYStats) and Carol Rogers, Co-Director of the **Indiana** University Business Research Center, both WDQI grantees and leaders in the workforce data community.

leadcenter.org

Opportunity); and Jeni Spaulding and Vern Westendorf (**Michigan** Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity). Thanks also to Bill Hurwitch and Laura Thompson from the SLDS support team for collaborating to host and summarize the event!

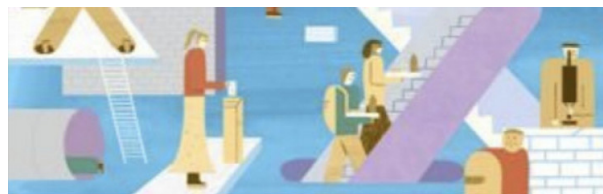
slds.ed.gov



WDQI Alumni in the News!

You remember [Dr. Justine Hastings](#), economist, professor, and founder of Research Improving People's Lives ([RIPL](#)) from our webinars or #MakingBetterWork [podcast](#) series? And [Amelia Roberts](#), **Rhode Island's** (RI) former WDQI lead who now works with Justine at RIPL? The two teamed up to write "Estimating value-added returns to labor training programs with causal machine learning" together with RIPL colleagues. So exciting, right? We knew you'd want to see it (and they made it open source).

osf.io



How 'Netflix for Jobs' Could Aid in the Great Resignation

Speaking of RIPL, while working with RI's WDQI team, the organization received [National Science Foundation](#) and CARES Act support to launch [DOORS](#)—Data for Opportunity in Occupation Reskilling Solution. DOORS uses artificial intelligence (AI) to connect people to jobs like Netflix connects people to entertainment. Politico named DOORS "[one of 17 pandemic innovations that are here to stay](#)." RIPL looks forward to launching **DOORS in Hawaii, Colorado, New Jersey, and possibly Oregon**. This is one example of sustaining (and leveraging) the value created through WDQI grant resources.

politico.com

Job Quality & Quality Jobs



Omicron Is Making America's Bad Jobs Even Worse



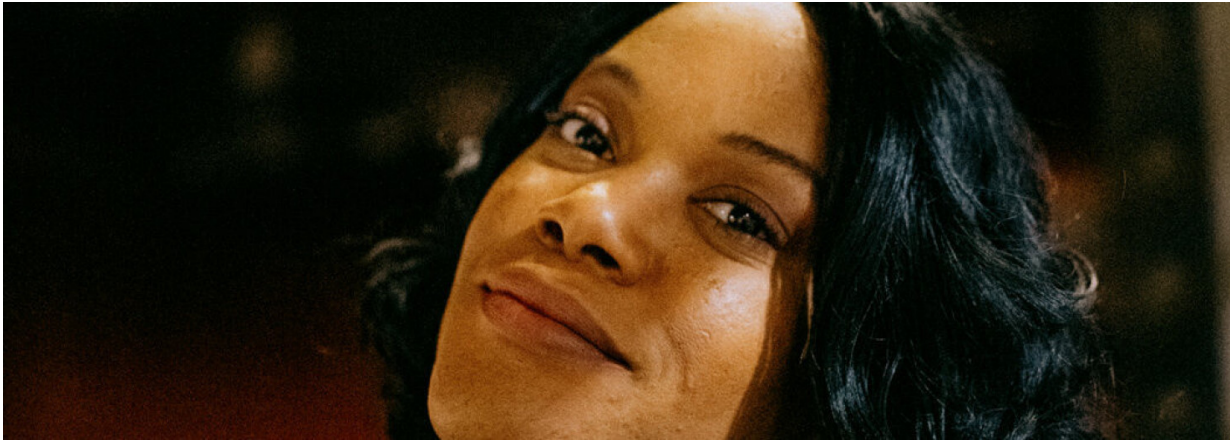
Job quality is a critical priority for workforce. The days of applauding essential workers have long passed. Recent wage boosts have generally not been accompanied by better benefits or more generous leave policies. And [surveillance](#). And [worse](#). @AspenWorkforce changed its name to @AspenJobQuality to draw attention to the issue. [Amanda Mull](#) says the latest wave of the pandemic is pushing service workers to the brink. How can our data inform solutions?

 theatlantic.com

What Results are Possible When You Redesign Jobs?

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions seeks to answer the job quality challenge. With the help of [Ellen G. Frank-Miller](#) and [Sophia R. Fox-Dichter](#), the organization has released a series of job quality outcomes maps that link employer outcomes (e.g., engagement at work) with job characteristics (e.g., terms of employment). An extensive [bibliography](#) accompanies this resource.

 nationalfund.org



Millions Have Lost a Step Into the Middle Class. Better Pathways into Careers and Skills-Based Hiring Can Help.

A new report points to the challenge for the majority of Americans who do not have a four-year college degree. [Opportunity@Work](#) found that these workers have been displaced from 7.4 million jobs. Enter today's tight labor market. Employers in need of talent are warming to the idea that not all jobs require a four-year degree. Some are also taking more active roles in training through work-based learning and apprenticeship, leading to better jobs, higher retention, and greater stability at home and at work.

 nytimes.com

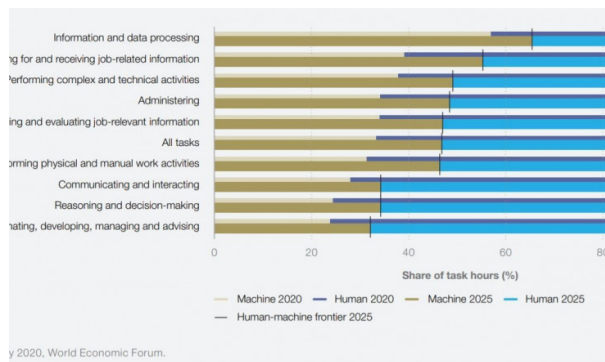
Future of Work, Redux

THE WORK OF THE FUTURE

Building Better Jobs in an Age of Intelligent Machines

The United States has too many low-quality, low-wage jobs. Every country has its share, but those in the United States are especially poorly paid and lacking in benefits. We lag behind other industrialized countries in sharing the benefits of innovation with workers. Building on findings from the multiyear [MIT Task Force on the Work of the Future](#), which we have covered extensively in this newsletter, [David Autor](#), [David Mindell](#), and [Elizabeth Reynolds](#) argue that we must foster institutional innovations that complement technological change. We think you see where we're going with this.

 mitpress.mit.edu



Robots Deployed at Record Rates in US Companies

Growing investment in AI and automation is causing a large uptick in the use of robots. Here's what it means for workers and the modern workplace.

 weforum.org



Why US Workers Can Be Optimistic About the 2020s

The demand for labor should remain steady as investments in robotics and other high-tech systems lead to the creation of new kinds of work (and new ways to measure it).

 news.northeastern.edu

A Way Forward?

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite get there). Here's our focus (always subject to change) going forward:

- **COVID-19 Recovery!** (Alas!)
- **Impact** (Products, legislation, key policy decisions, and more – what difference is WDQI making in your state, community?)
- **Governance** (In the words of one of our subject matter experts, "It's everything.")
- **Ecosystem** (How do we better align public data efforts and work with nonprofit, foundation, university, and other partners more effectively to address critical workforce and education issues? How do we do this consistently, ethically, and responsibly?)
- **Themes that run through WDQI events and activities:**
 - Federal legislative mandates (WIOA – and evaluation, HEA, Perkins, etc.)
 - Trends in training: non-degree credentials, work-based learning, apprenticeship, technology and distance learning, dual-systems, stackable credentials, etc.)
 - Future of Work – using data to help policymakers, institutional leaders, and the rest of us navigate it
 - Data Equity
 - #DataViz – so more people can understand, interact with, and use the data and tools we're all creating.
 - #DataStories – sharing data in ways that make it easy for stakeholders to understand, learn, and put it to use!

In case you've received this from a friend or colleague and don't know how to find us, we've provided our contact information below.

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This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration under Task Order Number 1630DC-19-F-00057. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government. More information about [WDQI](#).

Know someone who needs this content? Send them here.