



September 4, 2020

Labor Day

Monday, September 7, 2020. [The day we honor work and workers](#) for the 126th time in our nation's history – unless you live in Oregon which was [the first to declare a Labor Day holiday](#) seven years before. More than any in recent memory, this year calls on us to think hard, dig deep, and show up for people who need our help and for each other.

We're thrilled to be showing up alongside you. The rapid-fire pace at which you have been launching platforms, providing near-real-time data reports, and forging new partnerships in and across states is *remarkable*. Extra hats-off to those of you who have been performing these miracles from basements and bedrooms while providing care, feeding, and academic instruction to loved ones experiencing their own forms of trauma.

We're here to help. In the short term, we will continue to host web convenings on areas of urgent need and look for opportunities to partner with the wider workforce data community. Now more than ever, we must share information, intelligence, and experience so we can all respond to the needs of our communities faster and more effectively.

Toward that end, here's what's coming:

- **Webinar Series with DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy.** In the wake of the Great Recession, people with disabilities lost jobs at more than three times the rate of people without disabilities and had a tougher time reentering the labor market. Today we have data. Let's use it to do better.
 - *Part 1: Understanding WIOA Disability-Related Reporting: Tools for Data Visualization*, Thursday, September 17, 3:00-4:00 pm ET. [Registration required](#).
 - *Part 2: WIOA Disability-Related Reporting: A Deep Dive into the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL)*, Thursday, September 24, 3:00-4:00 pm ET. [Registration required](#).
- **The 2020 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort** is launching soon! Haven't submitted your [application for entry](#)? There's still time! You can do it today!
- **The 2020 SLDS Best Practices Conference** will be a virtual event November 18-19. It will include recorded and live sessions. The [Call for Feedback & Proposals is here](#) (applications

are due September 25). Data Viz, Governance, and Workforce Outcomes are all priority topics. Let's see some joint WDQI session proposals!

- **XPRIZE + New Profit's Rapid Reskilling Competition:** \$5 million, 30-months to a winning solution to the problem of quickly reskilling under-resourced workers for the digital revolution. Aspiring innovators must [register their teams by September 30](#).
- **The Reimagining Pathways to Employment in the US Challenge**—powered by MIT Solve, the [Morgridge Family Foundation](#), and [New Profit](#)—seeks the most promising solutions for accelerating pathways to current and future employment across the US. (Surely they will need data). [Solutions due November 9](#).
- Did we mention the [WDQI Community of Practice on WorkforceGPS](#) has launched?

Also, still open. . .

- The **U.S. Department of Labor's [Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants](#)** (\$40M) will expand community colleges' ability to meet labor market demand for a skilled workforce. We're betting state data systems can help track and assess progress. Applications due October 8.
- The **U.S. Department of Education's [Rural Tech Project](#)** (\$600,000 challenge) will advance rural technology education and prepare students for the careers of today and tomorrow. (We're betting applicants will need (longitudinal) data support here, too.) Applications due October 8.
- And if you missed the August convening, you can see what we worked on with the BrighHive team and Michelle Weise [right here](#). Slides, recording, and transcript are [here](#).

Still Less, Despite More!

Curating was tough this month, but we're sticking to our shorter form newsletter until you say otherwise. Brevity wins.

Finally, as a reminder, the Employment and Training Administration at DOL has aggregated [#COVID19 response resources and FAQs](#) just for you.

COVID19 et. al. remains *hard*. And we are workforce. We can all help support good work, effective learning, and community health and prosperity. If your sleeves are still fastened, unbutton and roll 'em up!

Take care of each other out there.



Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff), Editor

Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver), **Caitlin Grey** & the **SPR/BrightHive Support Team**

Nine Resources for the New Now



Automation and jobs in the new normal

In the before time, #FutureofWork was one of the most important issues we covered. It remains so, even as the context has changed. This special issue of Venture Beat explores the good, bad, and unknown of how automation could affect jobs in the immediate and near future and points to new questions to ask of your data going forward.

VB venturebeat.com



Covid-19 is Spurring the Digitisation of Government

It's nice to see the forest through the trees. This piece in The Economist speaks to the trade-offs of large-scale (think national) integrated systems weighed against cost, privacy, and public value. (It's British, so you know, the "s" rather than the "z.")

E economist.com



All In: Data for Community Health

Analogues can be revealing. *All In* is a learning community supporting data collaboratives focused on health. The site hosts a plain-English video on the social determinants of health (yep, employment, education, and jobs are in there), a library of resources and an inventory of community projects from across the country – [many](https://allindata.org) in WDQI states.

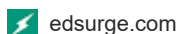
 allindata.org

What Workforce Education Is Learning From the Pandemic

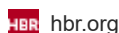
COVID19 has transformed the education technology landscape. EdSurge summarizes emerging trends of importance to workforce data professionals and policy makers alike.

Research: How Workers Shift from One Industry to Another

You know we can't resist a good Sankey chart. Illustrating the the movement of workers from one sector to another to inform

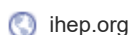


navigation support in the wake of COVID19 is an excellent use of them. You're welcome.



Calling Workforce Data Professionals

This new [Institute for Higher Education Policy](#) (IHEP) and [RTI](#) paper could have benefited from the participation of workforce data professionals in making its case for a more federal approach to student-level data. Nonetheless, it provides a useful summary of data elements relevant to key content areas in support of legislation to effect change. We thought it might be important for you to see since you'll likely be asked to weigh in on pending legislation made more urgent by COVID19.



Results for America's Invest in What Works State Standards

Results for America has catalogued 169 examples of data-driven and evidence-based practices, policies, programs, and systems in 35 states across the country. In three categories (Data Leadership, Data Policies, and Data Use), WDQI grantees are well represented. See how your state stacks up and what you can learn from your neighbors.



National Governors Association (NGA) Launches State Resource Hub

Designed to help states share knowledge and resources (updated daily), the new NGA platform hosts verticals in economic recovery, data and tech, remote work and learning, and unemployment insurance. We've heard these issues keep you up at night.



Out of the Crisis Podcast, Episode #20: Bitwise Founders on the role of technology in empowering people and communities in response to the COVID crisis.

Irma Olguin and Jake Soberal started Bitwise in 2013 with the idea that the technology industry could be used to repair and rebuild communities. Now they are working with nearly 20 states to help connect people with the resources they need to work, learn, and remain healthy in the wake of the pandemic. Onward has already launched in California, Colorado, and Illinois, and will soon be available in Texas and North Carolina – all Round 7 WDQI states.



Time-Out Treasures for Labor Day

To Beat a Pandemic, Prep for a Tsunami

Learn from the experience of Manzanita, Oregon on MIT's Deep Tech.

 [technologyreview.com](https://www.technologyreview.com)

Dorothea Lange's Photos at The Oakland Museum of California

Tiny windows into massive changes.

 dorothealange.museumca.org

Dill Pickles Recipe from Love and Lemons

Too many cucumbers? You know what to do.

 loveandlemons.com

The #MBW Podcast

Our Very Own #WDQI #MakingBetterWork Podcast Now Has 19 Episodes!

If you haven't subscribed, pull out your mobile device and do it now!

[iTunes](#) * [Stitcher](#) * [GooglePlay](#)

Search for **Making Better Work** on Google Play (a quirk of the platform).

Again, we hope these new communication channels will bring your work further into the public domain so that kindred spirits in different parts of the public data ecosystem can find each other. It's a big job but somebody's got to do it. Why not us?

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is the 19th edition of *#MakingBetterWork*, the perpetual beta newsletter of the longitudinal workforce data community.

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite

get there). We changed up the headers this month to make it easier to navigate. Let us know what you think!

Here's our focus (always subject to change) going forward:

- **COVID-19** (until future notice)
- **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
 - #DataViz – so more people can understand, interact with, and use the data and tools we're all creating.

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.

Kristin Wolff (Editor-in-Chief): Kristin_Wolff@spra.com

Maureen Sarver (Chief WDQI TA Architect): Maureen_Sarver@spra.com

Caitlin Grey (Data Wizard & TA Champion): Caitlin_Grey@spra.com

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the US Department of Labor or other public agencies (state, federal, or local) participating in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative. Mentions of trade names, commercial products or organizations does not imply endorsement of same by the US Government or representatives. Click for information about [WDQI](#).

Know someone who needs this newsletter? Forward it or send them here.