



September 30, 2021

Labor Day & Workforce Month Draw to a Close

We waited to publish so we could collect and share our favorites among the many treasures making their way through the interwebs since the first Monday in September. We hope you enjoyed your own [Labor Day](#), tipped your hat to [Frances Perkins](#), and cheered on (current and aspiring) workers everywhere—selves included, obviously. ☺

Speaking of cheers, congrats across the board to **CA, CO, ID, IL, ME, MI, NC, NJ, TX, and WI** WDQI teams! We finished up our annual deep-dive team state calls this month and were wowed by your progress despite #everything. We'll summarize some key themes and share products under development during our October webinar and ongoing. As a reminder, **for those in need of extensions, do not wait**. Contact your Federal Program Officer as soon as possible to begin the process.

Again, we say congrats to all of you for surviving (and even thriving) into 2021. We are honored to support you in helping each other succeed.

Goings-On in Workforce & Data

Our *highly* curated collection includes in-person, remote, and hybrid events. We have also seen a flurry of late fall/winter state workforce conferences coming together. Check your (state and) local listings (aka, workforce associations)! Finally, we have included a few things in this month's collection we've previewed before and have now officially launched or been substantively enhanced since last time around.

Happenings

- **Democratizing Our Data: A Challenge to Invest in Data and Evidence-based Policy**—This \$5M Coleridge Initiative challenge will focus on workforce data! Our friends at Coleridge are looking for innovative projects that go beyond summary statistics to reveal why and how education and training investments succeed or fail. Letters of intent due October 20, 2021. [More...](#)
- **SLDS/WDQI Annual Best Practice Conference**, November 8-10, 2021. Registration through **October 26** [here](#). The conference will convene remotely. As in previous years, there will be select workforce-focused content complemented by an adjacent WDQI convening.
- **NASWA Summit**, "Rhythms of Recovery," Austin, TX, December 7-8, 2021. [More...](#)
- **US Census Open Data Challenge**—Is there an app for that? This is not a workforce challenge, but if you have an app that can be repurposed (or know someone who does), here's your chance at \$210,000. Submissions due October 24, 2021. [Apply here...](#)
- **US Department of Commerce's Good Jobs Challenge**—\$500 million to support collaborative skills training systems and programs that advance equity. [Applications due January 26, 2022](#) (Still plenty of time

to develop the data strategies these efforts will need!). But that's not all! [Six sister American Rescue Plan programs](#) also await your participation!

Now Hiring!

(You, too? Send us your job listings, and we'll share the best of them!)

- **AtlasAI** is looking for two Data Scientists (one remote, one NY). [Refer someone great...](#)
- The **US Department of Labor** needs evaluation specialists in DC! Something tells me you all know wonderful people who would thrive in these roles! [Refer great people...](#)
- **JFF** is looking for talent across the board. [Refer someone great...](#)
- **Luminary Labs** needs a Director for its Future of Work and Education portfolio (I know!). So if you are near NY... and if not, [refer someone great...](#) They are also in need of a host of other luminaries. [More...](#)
- **Social Policy Research** (that's us!) needs programmers, researchers, and technical assistance support! [Refer someone great...](#)
- **Upjohn Institute** seeks a Senior Director of Regional Economic and Community Development. Looking at you, MI! [Refer someone great...](#)
- **Oregon** needs (wait for it...) a Data Governance Policy Analyst (for education and workforce). [Refer someone great...](#) Or suggest [this Business Data Analyst](#) role.

#ICYMI

- **#TalkAboutWork**—a Twitterchat about the words we use in workforce launched September 22, 2021. [Laura Aka](#) summarizes the event and links to [Working Nation's](#) accompanying [Words of Workforce Field Guide](#) right [here](#). It's not too late for you to contribute! Maybe share something about data using the hashtag? You know the one (#MakingBetterWork 😊).
- **Books about artificial intelligence & ethics!** [AI Ethicist](#) created this [top-notch collection](#) of books on AI and bias, ethics, social justice, and more. Experimenting with algorithms? This list is right up your alley.
- **Data Visualization Society** wants your input! Help shape the field and influence where it's heading by taking [this survey](#). Hurry! It closes **October 1!**
- A shoutout to our friends at the **U.S. Census Bureau** for the [terrific updates and explainer videos](#) finding their way into our in-boxes!

Honoring our First Secretary

In 2020, the Frances Perkins Center purchased the Frances Perkins Homestead in Newcastle, Maine. Now, they've [launched a campaign](#) to turn it into an educational resource just for us (and you know, everybody). We're betting Hunter and his team will volunteer to serve as the advance team.

Keep taking care of each other out there.

♡+ Data

Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff), Editor

Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver) **Dallas Oberlee** & the **SPR Support Team**

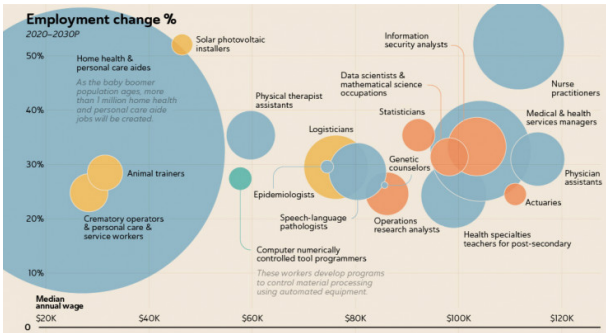
Better Workforce Data & Systems



Data Deluge

The subtitle of this new Workforce Monitor report is "Efforts to Create an Effective, Large Scale Federal Workforce & Labor Market Information System (WLMIS)." It also has a less formal moniker but we'll leave that for another day. Despite appearances to the contrary, it ends on a hopeful note, citing innovations WDQI community members are helping to create.

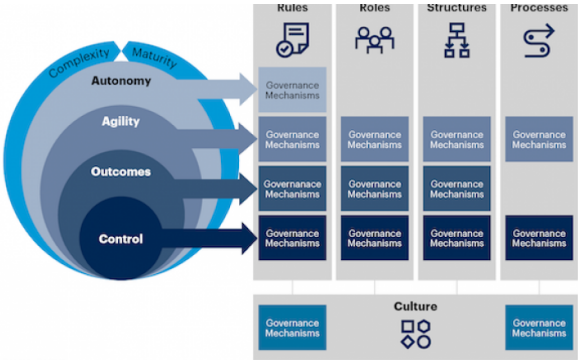
 wfmonitor.com



The 20 Fastest Growing Jobs in the Next Decade

DataViz meets data story. Visual Capitalist displays BLS data on job growth and decline, wages and provides a brief narrative on implications.

 visualcapitalist.com

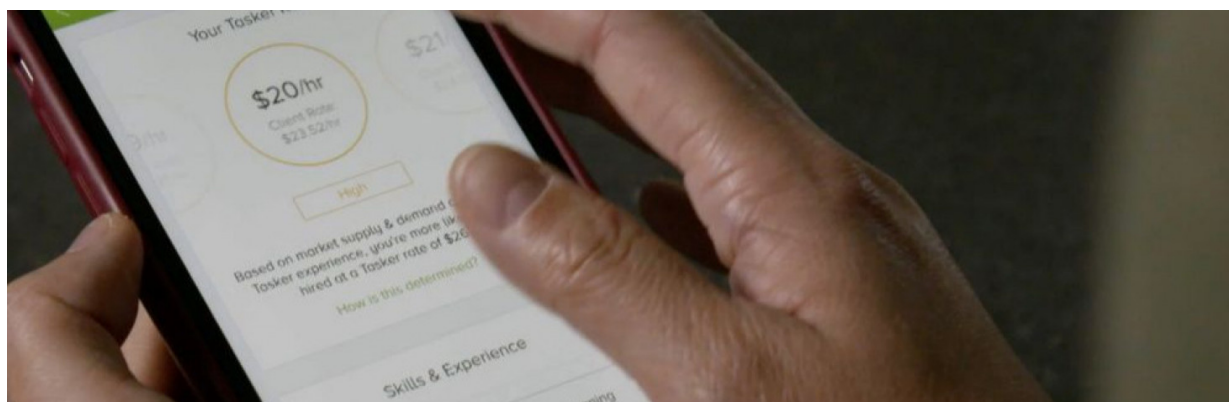


Governance for Greater Agility

The digital age requires refocusing governance styles and mechanisms to ensure good decision-making and help organizations become more adaptive. These four levers can help.

 blog.dataiku.com

Labor Markets & Work



Future of Work

Is the promise of employment – part of the American Dream – still the future of work? This three-part PBS series on the future of work is one of the first to take COVID-19 into account. It explores the monumental changes workers, firms, and communities are navigating. Six additional profiles are in development and [over a dozen short clips](#) are also available. Let us know what you think! #MakingBetterWork



pbs.org

Resilience After Recession: The Emerging Landscape for American Workers & Families

This Hamilton Project webcast took place yesterday, and the recording is up. Featuring [David Autor](#), [Michelle Holder](#), and cast of labor-market, workforce policy, and equity experts and others, it promises to be worth a listen.



hamiltonproject.org

The Future of Work & Inclusion

This International Economic Development Council (IEDC) report explores trends in employment, automation and their impacts on communities of color, and highlights strategies to connect workers to good jobs. Since the US Department of Commerce (see [Build Back Better](#)) will support much talent-centered recovery programming, workforce data experts may be well-placed to inform planning and implementation across education, workforce, and economic development agencies and jurisdictions. (Summary brief is accessible outside paywall.)



iedconline.org

Harvard's Project on Workforce: A Job Training Reform Agenda

Project Director Rachel Lipson argued for reform in [her piece in the Boston Globe Magazine](#) (paywall after three clicks), and then discussed her recommendations on [C-Span](#). You are in the data and evidence business. The Project on Workforce is building the evidence base for reform. Synergies abound.

Everybody's Hiring but Nobody's Getting Hired

Why is finding a job still impossible? We would like everyone in workforce to read (or listen to) this piece. At the risk of being the spoiler, the level of intermediation in our labor market relative to its poor functioning makes our heads spin. America is counting on you – public-minded data professionals – to help us navigate through this thicket and forge better paths.

Is Gig Work is Reversing 150 Years of Progress in How We Work?

It's a question Azeem Azhar explores in his new book, [The Exponential Age](#). Technology, he argues, is developing at an increasing, exponential rate. But human society – from our businesses to our political institutions – adapts at a slower, incremental pace. The result is an 'exponential gap' between the power of new technology and humans' ability to keep up. Azeem covered the Future of Work extensively in podcasts and articles that informed his thinking in the book. (He also help us out when we launched this newsletter – right back at you, [@Azeem](#) ☺).

 restofworld.org

State Innovations: NJ, WI & DOL!

New Jersey's Education to Earnings Data System

Heldrich Center researchers developed this nifty (customizable) dashboard to show what proportion of New Jersey's post-secondary graduates (2008-2013) are employed in New Jersey, and how much they earn.

 njeeds.org

Wisconsin's Data Integration System (WDIS) Toolkit

Wisconsin did not call it a toolkit but we will! One brief page explains WDIS, provides two explainer videos and support materials, and identifies the state's key learning agenda priorities. This is how it's done!

 dwd.wisconsin.gov

Informing Department of Labor Research

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Department of Labor (DOL) to conduct periodic field-level scans to inform investments in research and evaluation. This year, MPR and SPR teamed up to support this work, resulting in this summary document and two adjacent reports.

 dol.gov

Key Trends in Workforce

This report describes economic and policy developments with relevance for the public workforce system, up to the early days of the pandemic.

 dol.gov

Key Strategies Evidence Scan

This report summarizes the evidence and identifies research gaps related to critical topics in workforce development.

 dol.gov

Data, Research & Policy

COVID-19 Resources - Results for America

Results for America has created the simplest and most comprehensive list of pandemic and recovery resources we've seen to date. It's an excellent starting point for updates, including summaries of and links to federal laws and legislation, federal agency guidance, Executive Orders, and state and local government resources. We've shared it once before. It has aged well.

 results4america.org

Leveraging Data for Economic Recovery: A Roadmap

Designed for state-level Chief Data Officers and people who work with them, this Beeck Center guide points to the types of data – including workforce – states should rely on to advance economic recovery and improve economic mobility for their residents.

 beeckcenter.georgetow...

How Investments in Human Capital Contribute to Economic Growth

Authors explore the structure of the educational systems of Japan, the United States, and Germany, and use survey data to estimate the impact of education in each country on worker productivity. In effect, the paper examines the theory of change behind workforce development through three case studies.

 brookings.edu

Stackable Credentials: A Study of Pipelines in Three Ohio Sectors

The authors of this Rand study examined educational programs in healthcare, manufacturing and engineering technology, and information technology to see whether the ability to stack credentials positively affected workforce outcomes.

 rand.org

What to Do When People Draw Different Conclusions From the Same Data

In practice, as every analyst knows, interpreting data is a messy, subjective business. This piece points to crowdsourcing as a potential solution. Naturally, we could not agree more.

 hbr.org

Young Invincibles' Data Lab

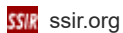
We stumbled onto the YI Data Lab, described as the nerve center of Young Invincibles' quantitative research. It uses a wide range of data sets to explore the economic challenges of young adults, map trends, and identify key issues within different young adult demographic groups. (Made your day there, didn't we?)

 younginvincibles.org

Strategy & Evidence-Building

Putting Evidence to Use

This Stanford Social Innovation Review piece offers a clear-eyed view of what gets in the way of evidence-based policy and research and how to clear the path. Our guess is, you'll be nodding along. It's nice to see your own experience written down in a field-leading journal – which serves as its own kind of evidence in favor of capacity building.



ssir.org

In Machines We Trust

A complement to the [Vox piece](#) on (non)hiring, this three-part podcast series explores the role of AI in workforce. It is high drama for workforce professionals. (Spoiler alert: humans required).



technologyreview.com

Is Our Relationship to Work the Cause of Our Labor Market Woes?

Food for thought: [Jonathon Malesic](#) argues, "Americans are not just burned out and underpaid — our entire relationship to work is broken."



nytimes.com

Just for You

Iterating with Legos

If you've used the original [Hot Butter Studio](#) image to describe your work before, take a deep breath — creative people have been adding new levels that extend into story and application. You are welcome.



web.stanford.edu

The #MBW Podcast

Our Very Own #WDQ!

***#MakingBetterWork Podcast Now Has
23 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 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 27th 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).

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.

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

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 newsletter? Forward it or send them here.