



WDQI Monthly Resources: September

1. America Works Data Center

The U.S. Chamber and Chamber Foundation's America Works initiative aims to tackle the current job crisis where many positions remain vacant, hindering business growth. The initiative focuses on analyzing job openings, labor force participation, and quit rates to understand the workforce state. It delves into the reasons behind the worker shortage and identifies the most affected states and industries, urging swift action from businesses and government to address the issue.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

2. AISP Network: Integrated Database on Child and Family Programs in Illinois

Chapin Hall's Integrated Database on Child and Family Programs in Illinois compiles administrative data from various human service partners to understand families engaging with child and family service agencies. The database's development involves utilizing advanced data security, computational algorithms, and alternative data sources. Chapin Hall collaborates with others to enhance their practices and share their expertise in integrated data management.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

3. Real World Data Science

"Real World Data Science" is a platform designed to educate and empower the data science community by highlighting practical examples of data science applications and fostering knowledge sharing among data scientists. The initiative depends on the support and contributions of the data science community, appreciating their involvement in reviewing open calls for contributions.

Click [here](#) to register/join.

4. Data initiatives need to innovate on public engagement: Here's how we can continue to improve

The United States government has a rich history of collecting and utilizing data, mandated by the Constitution's requirement for a decennial census. Data.gov, initiated during the Obama administration, has expanded to encompass over 250,000 data assets. The 2019 Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) mandates federal agencies to make their data more accessible and useful, engaging with the public to determine data and evidence priorities. To enhance public engagement, agencies can follow these strategies: articulate engagement goals, identify stakeholders clearly, acknowledge costs and benefits transparently, and invest in capacity building. Effective engagement not only improves transparency and decision-making but also fosters public trust in government initiatives.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

5. How one state's data office improves government services

Josh Martin, the Chief Data Officer for Indiana, played a crucial role during the early days of the pandemic. His team was tasked with helping a public health school determine COVID-19 prevalence using stratified random sampling. To achieve this, they needed a database of all Indiana residents, which Martin's team created by pulling data from various state agencies. This database proved invaluable for vaccine distribution, allowing notifications to residents based on age groups. Martin's team also used data to efficiently fill vaccine clinic slots, showcasing the power of connected datasets. However, Martin emphasized the need for data literacy among state employees and highlighted the challenges of hiring data scientists when private companies offer attractive benefits. He stressed the meaningful impact of working on projects that improve public welfare, making a compelling case for talented individuals to join the state sector.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

6. Higher Ed Should Pay Attention to the Corporate World's Growing Use of Skills Data

Employers are increasingly prioritizing skills over college degrees when hiring, a trend fueled by talent shortages in various sectors. The U.S. Department of Labor's recent report of 9.5 million job openings emphasizes this need. Government leaders, including state governors and the U.S. House of Representatives' Education and Workforce Committee, are supporting skills-based hiring for state positions. Despite this shift, degrees are still valuable, often resulting in higher salaries. However, alternatives such as micro credentials are gaining traction due to their affordability, relevance to employer needs, and digital accessibility. This reflects a growing shift in the hiring landscape.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

7. The Non-Degree Credential Quality Imperative

The report discusses efforts in multiple U.S. states and national partners to enhance the National Data Collaborative (NDC) landscape. It emphasizes aligning state-level access, affordability, and attainment policies with quality assurance frameworks. This alignment ensures that investments in high-quality credentials lead to positive and equitable outcomes for learners, workers, and employers. The report provides key insights for state policymakers, agency leaders, education and workforce advocates, and others on advancing quality assurance for NDCs. The goal is to build confidence among policymakers, students, and employers in supporting and selecting postsecondary pathways that effectively prepare students for careers.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

8. Using Labor Market Information to Improve Program and Credential Quality

The article discusses the importance of educational institutions using labor market information to align their programs and credentials with the available job market. However, the presence of such data doesn't guarantee its effective use due to varying staff experience and different institutional

approaches. A project, supported by the Lumina Foundation, aims to develop case studies involving diverse institutions, including community colleges, universities, and schools with a mix of programs. These studies will explore how and why these institutions utilize labor market data, followed by a national survey of colleges and universities involved in the project.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

9. Application of an antiracism lens in the field of implementation science (IS): Recommendations for reframing implementation research with a focus on justice and racial equity

The article discusses the gaps in promoting health equity through implementation science, highlighting that existing frameworks and approaches often do not explicitly focus on equity or consider the role of structural racism in shaping health disparities. The research aims to provide guidance on applying an antiracism lens to various elements of implementation research, including stakeholder engagement, conceptual frameworks, evidence-based interventions, evaluation methods, implementation strategies, and research conduct. The focus is on encouraging the field of implementation science to prioritize justice, equity, and real-world impact by integrating an anti-racism approach into their work.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

10. U.S. workforce data is behind the times. It's time to measure what matters most to the American people

The monthly jobs report in the U.S., while influential, often fails to capture the changing realities of the job market, especially concerning gig work and job quality. A recent report advocates for reimagining key datasets to present a more accurate picture of the economy and job quality. It calls for comprehensive data that includes all workers, including gig workers, and measures all aspects of job quality, not just pay. This approach aims to accurately measure worker experiences, taking into account factors like benefits, schedule stability, worker voice, and equal access to opportunity. The goal is to ensure that jobs not only provide employment but also dignity, mobility, and a good quality of life for workers and their families. By understanding the daily realities of work in America, policymakers, employers, investors, and workers can make informed decisions, fostering a competitive U.S. workforce that can thrive in the evolving job market.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

11. Education and Workforce Data Systems Should Answer Our Questions, Not Shape What We Ask

The article discusses the limitations in the available measures to understand students' progress and school effectiveness. The pandemic highlighted these challenges, especially for students in grades not typically tested and those with diverse learning needs. The lack of data on various aspects such as kindergarten readiness, college preparation, and workforce skills further complicates decision-making for policymakers and practitioners. To better support students, there's a need to identify crucial questions that can drive action and ensure that data systems covering pre-K to workforce are designed to answer these questions effectively.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

12. Non-degree Credentials Research Network (NCRN)

The Non-Degree Credentials Research Network (NCRN) is a project funded by the Lumina Foundation and managed by researchers at the George Washington Institute of Public Policy (GWIPP). NCRN brings together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to explore the role of certificates, certifications, and other non-degree credentials in the labor market.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

13. The Data Equity Premier - We All Count

The We All Count Data Equity Primer is a concise one-hour session aimed at familiarizing individuals with key issues related to the equitable and ethical use of data. It focuses on understanding the challenges in converting complex human questions into numerical data and then back into meaningful insights without perpetuating biases or unfairness. The primer emphasizes the importance of ensuring fairness in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data to prevent biases, unfairness, and errors in various stages of data projects.

Click [here](#) to register/join.

14. GALLUP Findings on College Value: Education for What?

A study conducted by Lumina Foundation and Gallup investigates the multifaceted impact of higher education on U.S. adults. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on financial outcomes, this research, titled "Education for What?," explores a wide range of economic and non-economic outcomes associated with higher education. The study reveals that pursuing additional years of education beyond high school not only leads to increased earnings but also contributes to a healthier, more civic-minded individual. Such individuals are more likely to engage with neighbors and family, and they tend to align their work with their natural talents and interests. This comprehensive approach highlights the diverse and positive effects of education beyond financial gains.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

15. States will soon be required to track post-welfare employment outcomes

Under the Fiscal Responsibility Act passed by Congress, U.S. states will be required to track the outcomes of families after they leave the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Starting from October 2024, states must compile data on what percentage of people were able to find jobs between four and six months after exiting the program and how much they are earning at those jobs. They also need to track how many are still employed approximately nine months after leaving the program, and for those aged 24 and younger, determine how many are attending high school or working toward their GED. The new reporting requirements aim to encourage states to better prepare welfare recipients for well-paying jobs after leaving the TANF program, promoting improved outcomes for program participants.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

16. Noncredit workforce training programs are very popular. We know next to nothing about them

This article discusses the importance of community college noncredit Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in bridging the skills gap between employers' needs and available workers. These programs are highly focused on job training and have a shorter duration than traditional degree programs. The article highlights the lack of comprehensive data on students participating in these programs, completion rates, and subsequent outcomes. In 2016, Virginia implemented the New Economy Workforce Grant (WCG), a pay-for-performance funding mechanism to expand participation in noncredit CTE programs. The WCG mandates statewide collection of student-level noncredit CTE data, providing valuable insights into program enrollment, completion, industry credential attainment, and labor market outcomes. The article emphasizes the need for further research to explore the labor market impacts and the effectiveness of Virginia's unique pay-for-performance model in funding noncredit CTE programs.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

17. How States Can Use Longitudinal Data Systems to Map Equitable Pathways to Living Wage Jobs

The post discusses the importance of educational attainment in achieving economic stability and highlights the disparities in educational opportunities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and economic status. It emphasizes the need to use state longitudinal data systems to understand the factors influencing students' pathways, degree attainment, and employment outcomes. The post introduces the Education-to-Workforce Indicator Framework (E-W Framework), recommending that states collect and report 99 indicators across the pre-K-to-workforce continuum to address structural inequities and help students attain living wages. The post suggests steps states can take to enhance longitudinal data systems and provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' opportunities.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

18. Montana Launches First-of-its-Kind, Statewide Micro-credential Initiative

Education Design Lab, in collaboration with the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and Montana's public two-year colleges, has launched the "Year to Career" Initiative in Montana. This initiative aims to expand the college-to-career pipeline by designing skills-focused educational pathways to meet the state's growing workforce needs. Twelve Montana colleges will establish 12-20 "micro-pathways," which are stackable credentials that can be achieved within less than a year. These pathways will lead learners to either an associate degree or immediate employment in high-demand fields such as information technology, allied health, construction, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture technology. The initiative is designed to create flexible, cost-effective options for educational attainment, particularly for low-income families and individuals in rural communities. The effort involves collaboration with various partners, including industry leaders, tribal colleges, economic development agencies, and employers throughout the state. The initiative is supported by funding from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, Walmart, the Charles Koch Foundation, and the Carnegie Foundation.

Click [here](#) to learn more.