

WDQI Monthly Resources: February

1. ETA Listening Series on Strengthening the Workforce Data Ecosystem

ETA Region 4 State LMI Directors and WDQI grantees (current and former) are invited to a national listening series by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) aimed at Strengthening the Workforce Data Ecosystem. The series, scheduled for March and April 2024, comprises three virtual sessions designed for interactive discussions on workforce data and labor market information. Participants are encouraged to offer suggestions on how ETA can better support workforce data users. The sessions will be held on **March 14th, March 28th, and April 18th, 2:00pm – 3:30pm EST**, and registration details will be provided soon through state agency administrators through their ETA/state channels. There will be no cost to attend the event, but online registration will be required.

2. CTE Research Network Convening: Expanding the Evidence Base for Career and Technical Education

March 20, 2024: Join the **CTE Research Network Convening: Expanding the Evidence Base for Career and Technical Education**. This complimentary in-person gathering will delve into fresh research showcasing the efficacy of CTE in fostering positive student outcomes. Engage with CTE experts, national leaders, state and district administrators, and U.S. Department of Education officials as we unveil cutting-edge findings, examine field responses, and identify areas necessitating further research. Breakout sessions will cover diverse topics including work-based learning, CTE's impact on gender dynamics, and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

3. Data Labs Program Now Accepting Project Proposals

March 22, 2024 (application deadline): Elevate your state's data capabilities to new heights by joining the **Beeck Center / NGA Data Labs Program** – an eight-month virtual cohort that offers hands-on support in kickstarting a data project and securing support from key stakeholders. State teams commit one to two hours a week to strategic thinking and action planning and walk away with a customized roadmap and deliverable ready for implementation. Data Labs is currently seeking project proposals for data projects related to safety net benefits, workforce transitions, and student outcomes. You might even see a photo of a former WDQI colleague from WI in the description!

Click [here](#) to learn more.

4. Moving From Idea to Practice: Three Resources to Streamline the Creation of Data Sharing Agreements

Data collaborations are essential for leveraging diverse datasets to generate insights that drive impactful decisions, yet accessing and harnessing data from various sources often presents challenges. The process of forming data sharing agreements (DSAs) can be intricate and time-consuming for actors in both the public and private sectors, lacking clear guidance for data stewards. To address this, the Open Data Policy Lab and TrustRelay convened experts in law, data, and smart cities in February and March 2023, culminating in the creation of three documents aimed at assisting data stewards in overcoming common barriers to DSA formation.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

5. After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031

This Center for Education and the Workforce (Georgetown) report offers a comprehensive national overview of job projections and their corresponding educational prerequisites across various industries, occupational clusters, and detailed occupational groups. Anticipating a significant shift in the job landscape by 2031, with 72 percent of jobs in the US necessitating postsecondary education and/or training, the report underscores the critical role of postsecondary education in shaping the future workforce. With an average of 18.5 million job openings per year expected between 2021 and 2031, of which approximately 12.5 million will mandate some level of college education, these projections highlight the evolving educational demands in the labor market.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

6. Talent Disrupted: College Graduates, Unemployment and the Way Forward

New research highlights what states and institutions can do to help more graduates secure college-level jobs. A follow-up to the [Permanent Detour](#) (2018), this new report by the Burning Glass Institute and the Strada Education Foundation explores underemployment among college completers. Among the findings are the importance of work and work-based learning prior to graduation and a good-quality first job afterward.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

7. Defining a Workforce Development Training System

The U.S. postsecondary education and workforce development landscape has long suffered from fragmentation, with a disconnect between learner preparation and workforce demands. Despite substantial investments, funding and data sources operate independently, exacerbating the issue. This Evollution piece discusses insights from The Workforce Almanac and what might be done to enhance it to generate additional insights.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



8. A Vision to Transform State Data Systems to Inform People's Pathways through Education and the Workforce

States have long invested in statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDSs) to track individual-level data across education and workforce sectors. Despite this investment, these systems often fail to provide individuals with the necessary information for informed decision-making. This DQC resource presents a vision for enhancing data access to drive student success, economic mobility, and systemic change. It outlines the types of data access needed, highlights four use cases where SLDSs are essential, and offers actionable steps for state and federal leaders to realize this vision. (We've shared it before but are giving in another boost.)

Click [here](#) to learn more.

9. The Challenge of Assessing the Quality of Microcredentials

Parents and educators generally support students pursuing nondegree pathways after high school, but a survey by American Student Assistance and Jobs for the Future reveals a lack of information about the quality of available programs. While interest in microcredentials is high among parents and educators, there is uncertainty about program quality and employer preferences. Stackability, the ability to apply a credential toward a degree, is seen as crucial for assessing the quality of nondegree pathways, emphasizing the need for further research and focus on lifelong learning opportunities.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

10. Training and Employment Notice No. 21-23

This document aims to alert grant recipients about the critical importance of safeguarding essential identifying information contained in the Grant Notice of Award (NOA) to prevent unauthorized use. This includes protecting against fraudulent activities such as unauthorized access to federal systems. By emphasizing the need for vigilance in safeguarding sensitive information, we hope to mitigate the risk of exploitation and maintain the integrity of the grant award process.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

11. Improving Program Delivery with Innovative Data Practices at the U.S. Department of Commerce

The American Rescue Plan (ARP), the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Inflation and Reduction Act (IRA), and the CHIPS and Science Act provide the U.S. Department of Commerce with unprecedented new resources for fostering economic growth and opportunity across communities. To maximize the impact of these programs, robust data practices are essential. The Commerce Data Governance Board (CDGB) established the Metrics Working Group to enhance data utilization in program design, delivery, and evaluation. This brief post summarizes their activities in the areas of high-quality data collection, streamlined processes, and linking program data with statistical datasets for comprehensive analysis to support evidence-building.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



12. Transforming the Business of Government: Insights on Resiliency, Innovation, and Performance

The IBM Center for the Business of Government released a retrospective special edition book on the transformation of government. It explores how governments grapple with complex challenges and foster innovation across many domains (including workforce) and in the context of broader technology, economic, and societal shifts.

Click [here](#) to learn more. Podcast interview [here](#).

13. Data Is What Data Does: Regulating Based on Harm and Risk

The rise of heightened protection for sensitive data, as seen in privacy laws globally, originated in EU data protection regulations like the GDPR. Sensitive data categories, including racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, and health, receive extra safeguards. However, this approach faces criticism for its arbitrary nature and lack of coherent theory. The blurred boundaries between categories make enforcement challenging, and nonsensitive data can often indirectly reveal sensitive information. This Northwestern University Law Review article proposes a shift to protections that are proportionate to risks associated with data collection, use, and transfer.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

14. Future-Proofing Transparency: Re-Thinking Public Record Governance For the Age of Big Data

Public records, deeds, and open data portals often contain personal information readily accessible online, yet there is limited literature on governing such data. This article explores the balance between privacy and transparency in public record management amid the era of Big Data. With advanced algorithms, public records can reveal sensitive details or construct comprehensive profiles, raising concerns about privacy. While public access to records serves various purposes like political accountability and combating crime, the ease of revealing sensitive data poses challenges. This Michigan State Law Review article proposes a risk-based framework to govern public records, leveraging technology and legal methods to manage data publication and access effectively.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



15. Interwoven Realms: Data Governance as the Bedrock for AI Governance

This Data & Policy post by Stefaan Verhulst explores the overlooked connection between AI governance and data governance, emphasizing the necessity of integrating robust data governance into discussions on AI governance. It provides six reasons why effective AI governance relies on comprehensive data governance, covering aspects such as data lifecycle management, responsible data availability, compliance, stakeholder engagement, and technology-agnostic standards. It also emphasizes the importance of a cohesive approach to governing transformative technologies like AI, IoT, etc., to ensure ethical, legal, and societal alignment, concluding with a call to strengthen global efforts in data governance and stewardship.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

16. Complex Data Systems and Analytical Approaches: Facilitating Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Coleridge Initiative's Nathan Barrett, Benjamin Feder, and Corey Sparks explore the intricacies of data systems and analytical methods for evidence-based decision-making. As policy questions grow more complex, the Coleridge Initiative's Applied Data Analytics (ADA) training programs address these challenges, enhancing both data infrastructure and agency staff's analytical skills. Developed collaboratively with partner states, the program's curriculum employs a project-based learning approach, allowing participants to engage hands-on with micro-level data, fostering a deeper understanding of value-based outcomes. Additionally, Coleridge introduces a short course series diving into core data analytic concepts. This webinar offers insights into ADA programs, product offerings, and the innovative potential they hold.

Click [here](#) to watch virtual session.



Provocations

17. OPINION: Ask not what can be done with a humanities degree

The Hechinger Report, a national nonprofit newsroom dedicated to education reporting, highlights the common skepticism surrounding humanities degrees and the societal pressure for educational investment to yield tangible returns. Drawing on personal experience and familial expectations, the author reflects on the enduring value of humanities education amidst changing perceptions of higher education's utility. Serving as the dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University, the author emphasizes the institution's commitment to providing access-oriented education and transformative learning experiences. They underscore the release of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences' Humanities Indicators report as a pivotal moment, challenging prevailing narratives about the humanities' decline and low return on investment. The report offers compelling data showing that humanities graduates not only earn competitive salaries but also exhibit versatility in diverse occupations across all states. In an era of rapid technological advancement, the report serves as a valuable resource for guiding current and prospective humanities majors in navigating the evolving job market landscape.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

18. How Training Repayment Agreements Trap Employees in their Jobs

The NYT article explores the implications of training repayment agreements, which often bind employees to their current jobs due to financial constraints. These agreements, common in industries like healthcare and technology, require employees to reimburse their employers for training costs if they leave within a specified timeframe. While intended to incentivize retention and investment in employee development, they can have unintended consequences, such as limiting job mobility and perpetuating inequities. The article highlights the experiences of workers who feel trapped by these agreements and advocates for greater transparency, fairness, and regulation to ensure that employees are not unfairly burdened by the cost of their training.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



19. Choosing AI's Impact on the Future of Work

OpenAI made waves with the release of ChatGPT, thrusting "generative AI" into household conversations globally. CEO Sam Altman's remarks underscored the inevitable job displacement AI heralds. This year's labor strikes by the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA further spotlighted AI's threat to well-paid professions. As AI reshapes the workforce, whether it exacerbates or alleviates inequality remains uncertain. While AI's potential mirrors past transformative technologies, its impacts depend on decision-makers steering its development. The narrative of AI as an inevitable force overlooks history's lesson: technologies evolve based on decisions made by those in power. The consequences of AI's trajectory—whether augmenting human capabilities or replacing workers—are contingent on three social shifts: management recognizing labor as a resource, tech prioritizing worker assistance over automation, and labor securing a voice in technology's deployment. These changes, though challenging, offer a path toward a more equitable AI-driven future.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

