

# Building Better Pathways to Economic Mobility

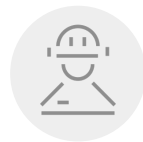
Kerry McKittrick & Nathalie Gazzaneo

10.26.23



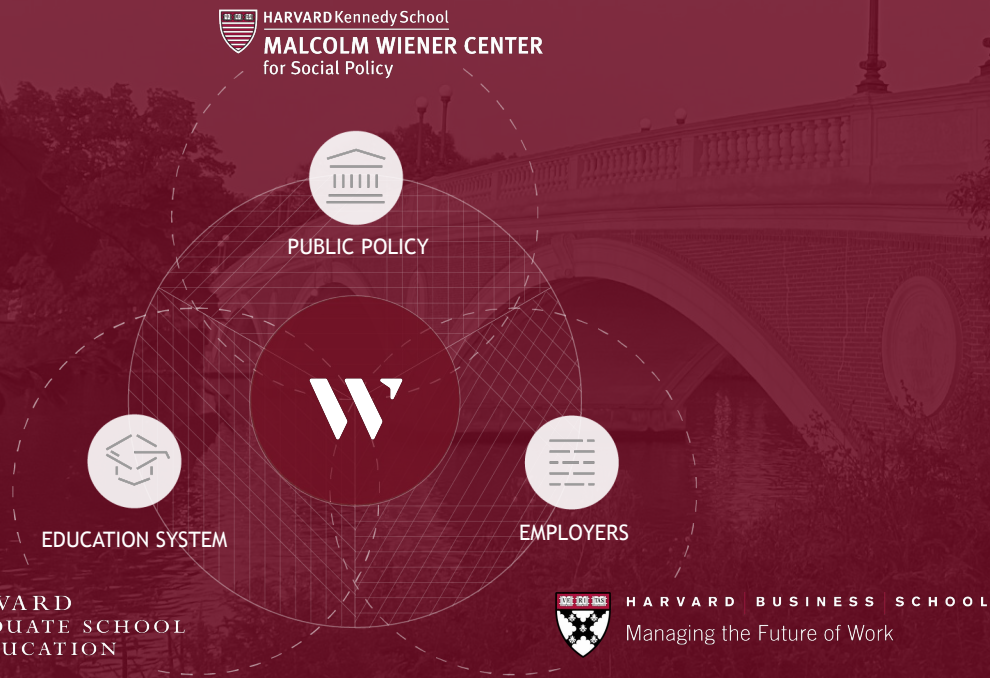
# AGENDA

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- **Background**
- **College-to-Jobs (+Discussion)**
- **Workforce Almanac (+Discussion)**

# WHO WE ARE



The Project on Workforce is an interdisciplinary, collaborative project between the **Harvard Kennedy School Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy**, the **Harvard Business School Managing the Future of Work Project**, and the **Harvard Graduate School of Education**.

# OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

# OUR MISSION

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We are charting the course for a postsecondary system of the future that creates more and better pathways to economic mobility.

We use research to catalyze action across business, education and policy and create smoother transitions between education and good jobs.

# OUR INITIATIVES

THE WORKFORCE  
a l m a n a c

COLLEGE-TO-JOBS



**STARS**  
SKILLED THROUGH  
ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

HIDDEN WORKERS:  
UNTAPPED TALENT

*America's Hidden  
Economic Engines:  
Community Colleges &  
Shared Prosperity*

THE  
AMERICAN  
OPPORTUNITY  
INDEX

THE WORKFORCE  
a l m a n a c



HBS RESKILLING LAB



MORE PATHWAYS



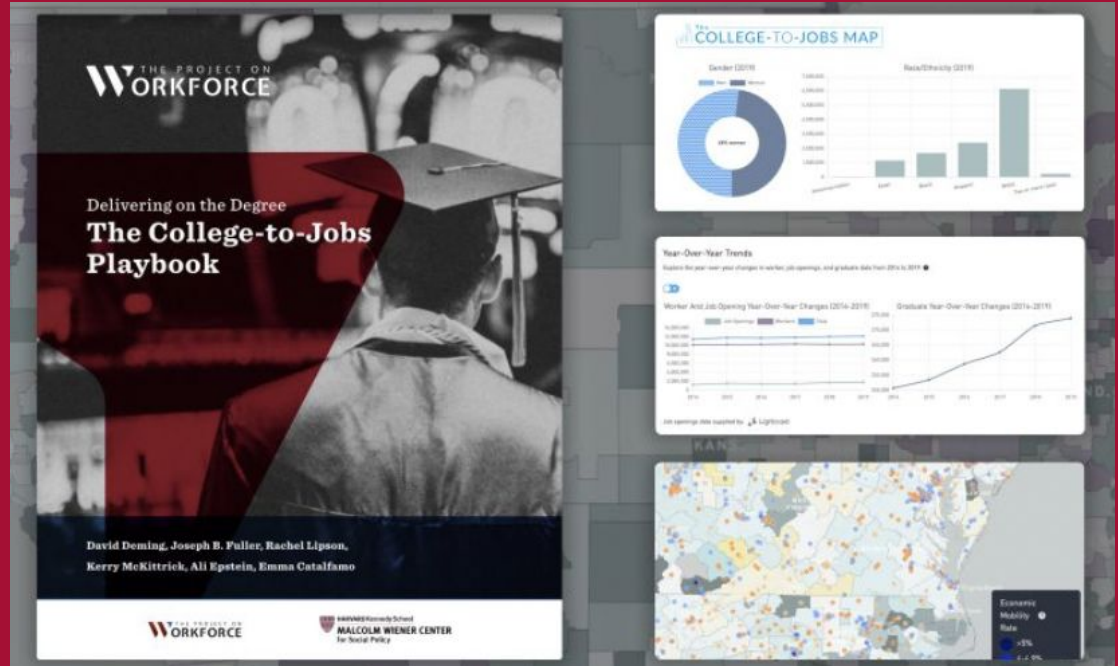
SMOOTHER TRANSITIONS



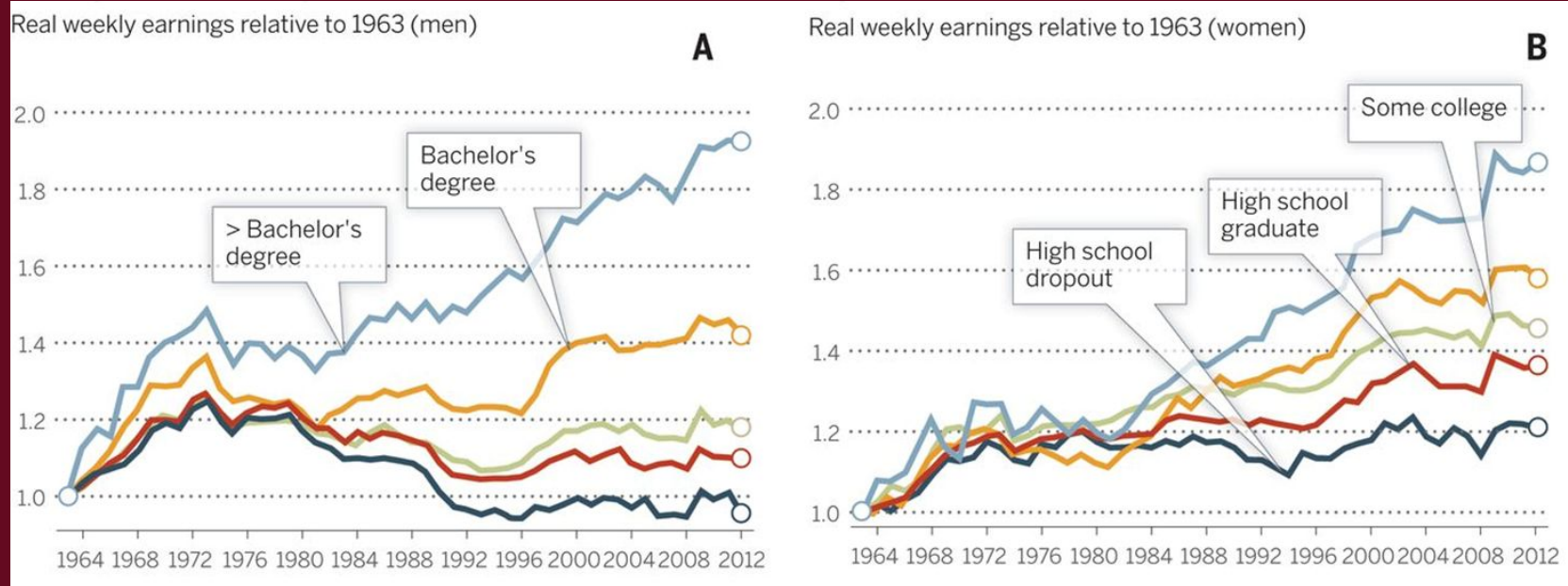
ACCESSIBLE DATA

# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS

*Investigating the connections between college and careers—the importance of smooth transitions; and the (mis)alignment between education and industry*



On average, the more education you have, the more money you earn...



SOURCE: AUTOR 2014



But Americans are questioning whether college can deliver on the American dream.

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26%

Of working U.S. adults with college experience strongly agree that their education is relevant to their work and day-to-day life.

57%

Of Americans say the higher education system in the US fails to provide good value for the money students and their families spend.

SOURCE: STRADA-GALLUP 2018; PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2017.

# A skilled workforce is crucial to regional economic prosperity.

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# #1

Workforce Skills is the #1 factor cited by mayors in trying to attract businesses to their communities

# 26%

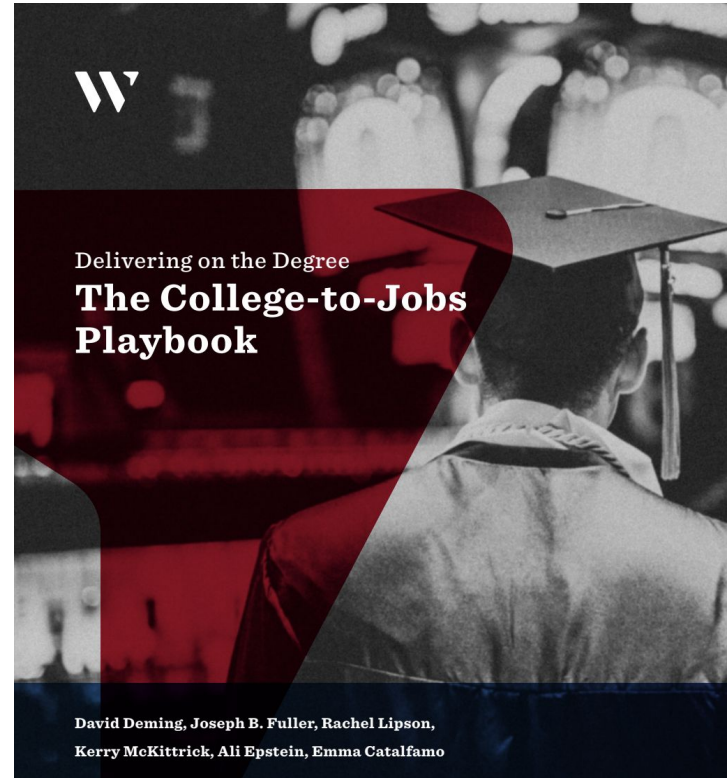
Just 26% of employers strongly agree that community colleges are producing the work-ready employees that their company needs

SOURCE: MENINO SURVEY OF MAYORS 2018; FULLER & RAMAN 2022

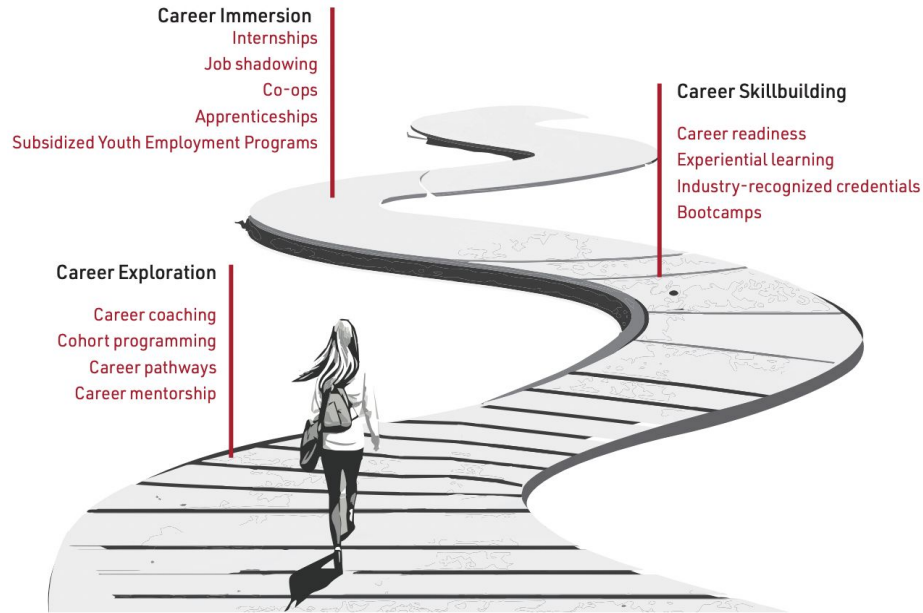
# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS PLAYBOOK

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*What can colleges, employers, policymakers, and other stakeholders do to launch college students onto **successful career trajectories?***



# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS PLAYBOOK: Overview



- Identifies **13 interventions** that connect college students to economic opportunity.
- Summarizes the **research and practice** for each intervention
- Provides a comprehensive picture of the **actions stakeholders can take** to improve college students' economic outcomes.

# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS MATRIX

- **Research Prevalence:** Structured and more established initiatives have larger bodies of research.
- **Research Strength:** Only a few interventions have proven economic impacts, although most promote positive student outcomes.
- **Implementation Prevalence:** Siloed or unstructured interventions are more common.
- **Implementation Feasibility:** Interventions that are higher-touch; require trained staff, funding, coordination; and culture change are more difficult to implement.

Intervention Category	Research Prevalence	Research Strength	Implementation Prevalence	Implementation Feasibility
Career coaching				
Cohort programming				
Career pathways initiatives				
Career mentorship Programs				
Career readiness curriculum				
Experiential learning coursework				
Industry-recognized credentials				
Last-mile bootcamps				
Internships				
Job shadowing				
Co-ops				
Apprenticeships				
Subsidized youth employment programs				

# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS PLAYBOOK: Findings

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1. The college-to-jobs **ecosystem is poorly aligned** in research and practice, making collaboration difficult and limiting accountability.
2. The college and career navigation process is often a difficult, **disjointed experience for students.**
3. Interventions are often **implemented inequitably**, but there are strategies to improve access and success for underserved students.

# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS PLAYBOOK: Recommendations

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## **Colleges must put economic mobility at the center of their mission.**

- Integrate experiential learning into coursework.
- Provide for-credit or paid career learning opportunities.
- Combine academic, career, and financial advising.
- Create a “go-to” place for employers to engage with faculty and students.
- Participate in regional economic entities at the leadership level.

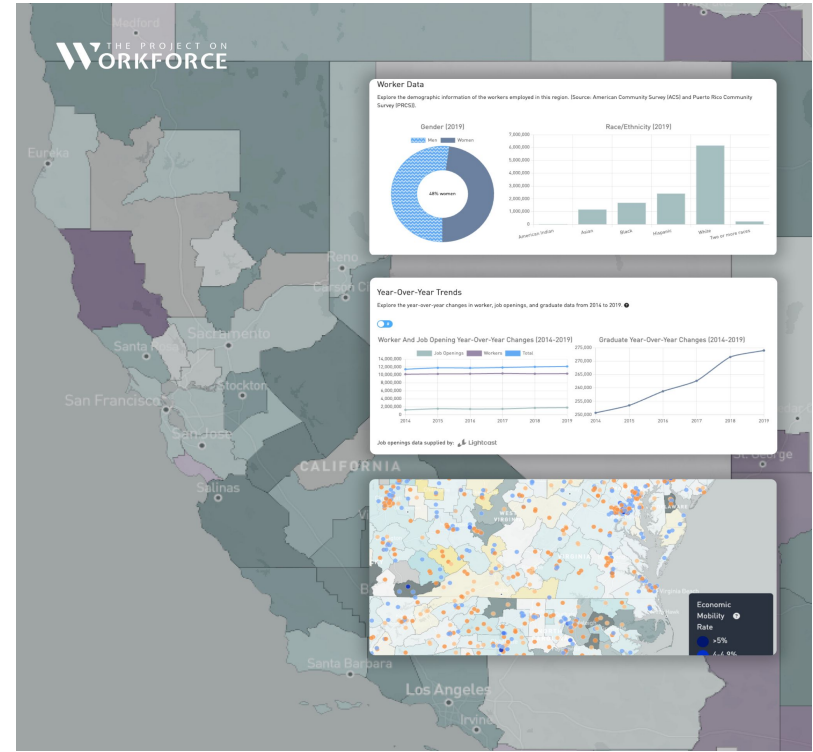


## **Employers must invest in regional partnerships.**

- Engage with community colleges, HBCUs, and MSIs to diversify the workforce pipeline.
- Develop structured, paid career immersion experiences.
- Provide resources to support new job-aligned programs.

# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS MAP

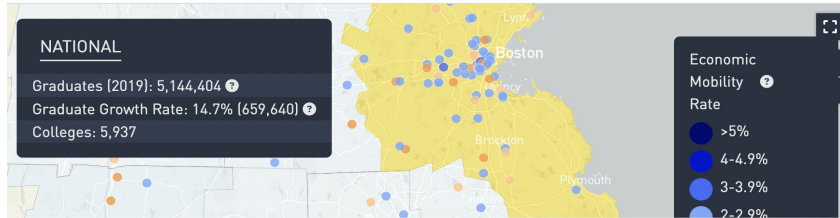
- **One-stop shop** for information about higher education and labor markets, with a regional lens.
- Links **education and employment data** and compares regional growth
- **Informs local conversations** and strategies for economic development practitioners, educators, employers, and policymakers.





# COLLEGE-TO-JOBS MAP: Boston-Cambridge-Newton

## College Graduate Data



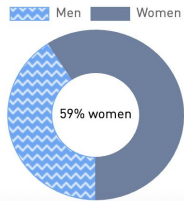
REGION: Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH

Median Debt (1 Year Post-Grad) \$25,899

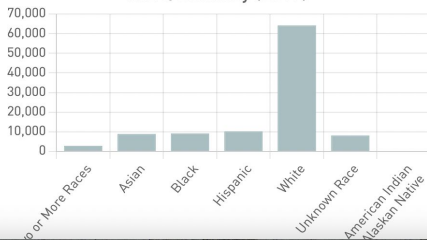
Median Income (1 Year Post-Grad) \$47,260

Median Debt to Earnings Ratio: 0.5

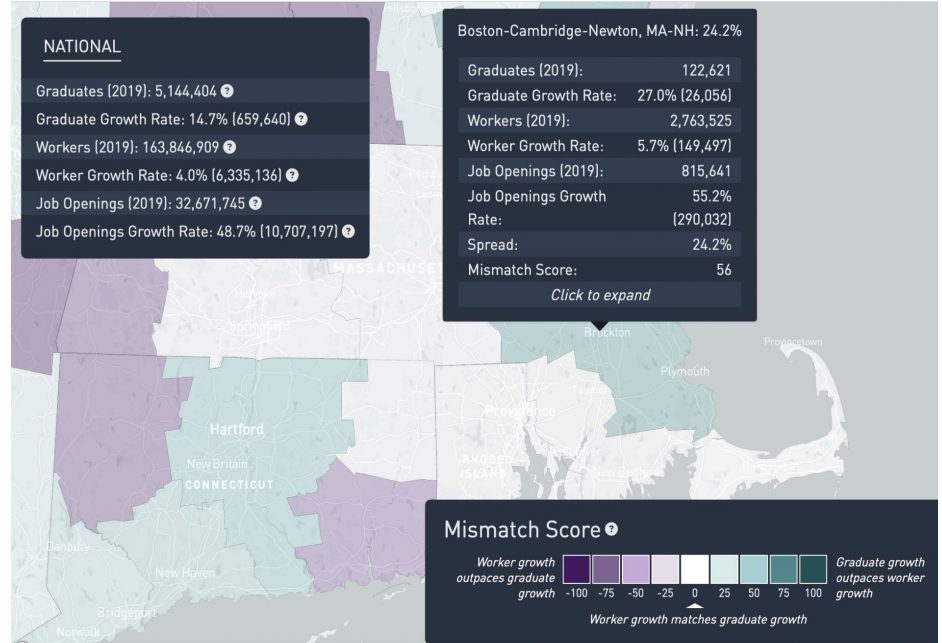
### Gender (2019)



### Race/Ethnicity (2019)



## Labor Market “Mismatch” Data



<https://www.pw.hks.harvard.edu/college-to-jobs>

# DISCUSSION #1

1. What are the challenges—and best practices—to building employer-college partnerships?
2. How might we expand access to equitable work-based learning opportunities?
3. How might we build better data systems to align programs and track economic outcomes?
4. What are the opportunities to leverage AI to improve education and labor market connections?

# APPENDIX: COLLEGE-TO-JOBS MAP

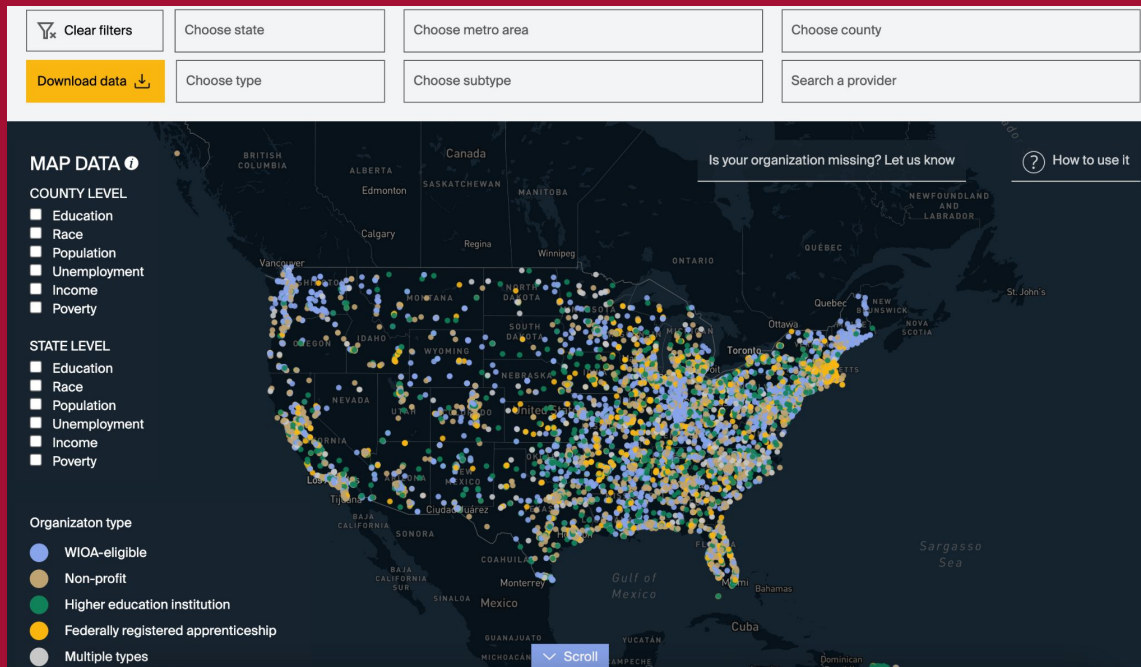
Data	Variables of Interest
<b>College Scorecard</b>	Institution Characteristics (Public/Private, MSI, etc.) Student Demographics (Race, Gender, % Pell-eligible etc.) Degrees Offered
<b>IPEDS</b>	Additional Institution Characteristics
<b>National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)</b>	Field of Study-to-Job Crosswalk
<b>American Community Survey (ACS) and Puerto Rican Community Survey (PRCS)</b>	Population Counts by Occupation, Employment Status, Demographics (County, Labor Market Area-wide)
<b>Bureau of Labor Statistics</b>	Occupational Growth Projections (State-wide)
<b>Lightcast</b>	Job Postings
<b>Opportunity Insights, Mobility Report Cards</b>	Economic Mobility Scores by Institution Student's adult income (at ~35 years old) by Institution
<b>Projections Central Long-Term Employment Projections</b>	Forecast modeling

# WORKFORCE ALMANAC

A new, open-source tool that illuminates where there are workforce training gaps in the US

*How are different communities and areas across the U.S. served by different types of short-term workforce training providers?*

*Including higher education, WIOA-eligible, registered apprenticeship sponsors, and non-profit organizations.*



# USE CASES



*Policymakers*



*Philanthropies*



*Training Providers*



*Researchers*

## EXAMPLE USE CASE

Want to understand how specific regions and communities are served by the workforce development sector.

Need data to inform their decisions about where and how to invest in workforce training providers.

Want understand how they compare to others in their region or elsewhere on key characteristics and metrics.

Want to be visible to philanthropies, investors and workers.

Need data to inform their decisions about where and how to start new offerings or reallocate existing ones.

Want to explore the provision of short-term workforce training across different regions and types of providers.

Need system-level data to perform statistical and geospatial analysis of the workforce development sector.

# DISCUSSION #2

1. Any clear use cases we haven't thought of?
2. What analyses would you be excited to do with this data portal?
3. What additional data/visualizations/content would you like to see in future releases?

Get Updates  
on our work



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