

Education and Workforce Data Connections: A Primer

There is an increasing focus at the state and federal levels on linking education and workforce data to help inform policies and practices. This primer is intended to provide policymakers with:

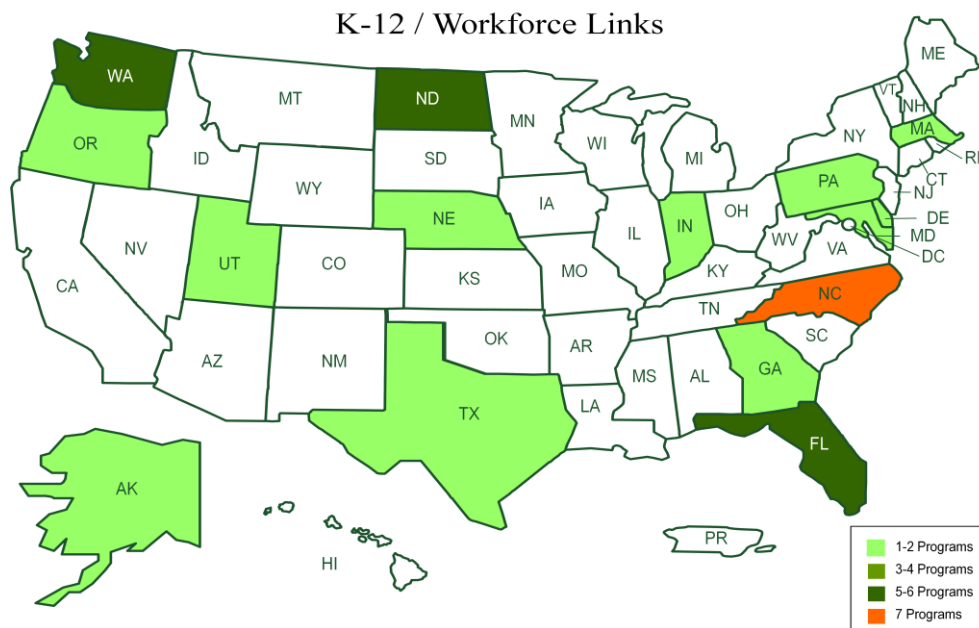
1. An overview of the status of states vis-à-vis the linking of education and workforce data;
2. A subset of questions policymakers can begin to address through the linking of appropriate education and workforce data elements;
3. Examples of the barriers that limit states ability to link education and workforce data; and
4. Suggested next steps.

The State of the Nation

States have made tremendous progress over the past four years in the development of statewide education longitudinal data systems; however, the systematic linking of education and workforce data is only in its beginnings stages. Results from the Data Quality Campaign 2010 Annual Survey of State Longitudinal Data Systems indicate that:

- 15 states link K-12 data with data from at least one workforce program at least annually.
- 25 states link PS data with data from at least one workforce program at least annually.
- 10 states link data across the P20/Workforce spectrum.

States Status with Regard to Connecting Education and Workforce Data (2010)



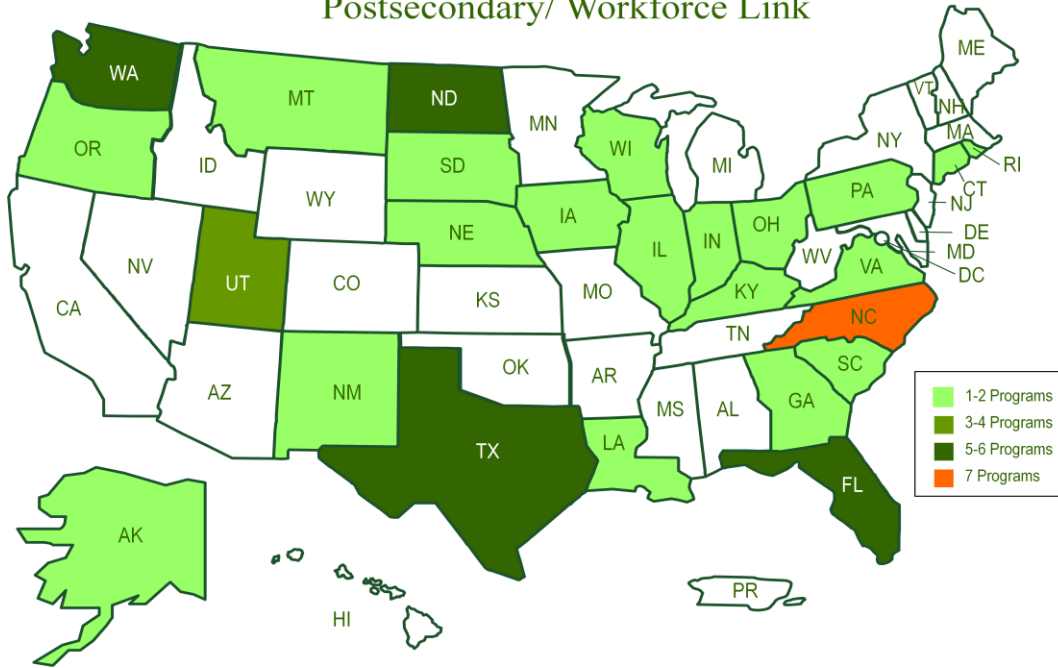
About the Data Quality Campaign Annual Survey

The DQC conducts an annual survey of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to assess state progress toward the implementation of the 10 Essential Elements of a longitudinal data system. State education agencies self-report on the capabilities of their data system. The DQC analyzes state responses to determine if a state meets the requirements for having an Essential Element or a State Action.

For additional information about your state's progress visit:

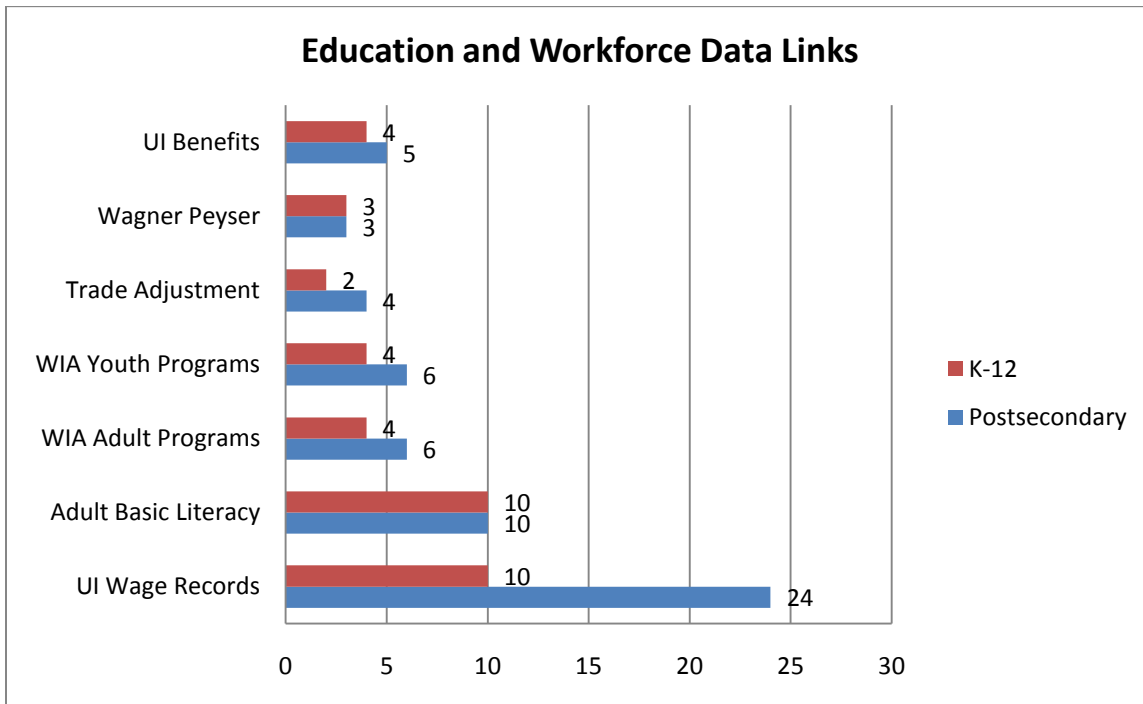
www.DataQualityCampaign.org/survey/.

Postsecondary/ Workforce Link



Types of Linked Workforce Data

The DQC surveyed states about seven workforce-related data sources. Of these, many states have chosen to begin by linking their education data to data from the Unemployment Wage Record system.



Linking Education and Workforce Data Can Help Policymakers Address Key Policy Questions

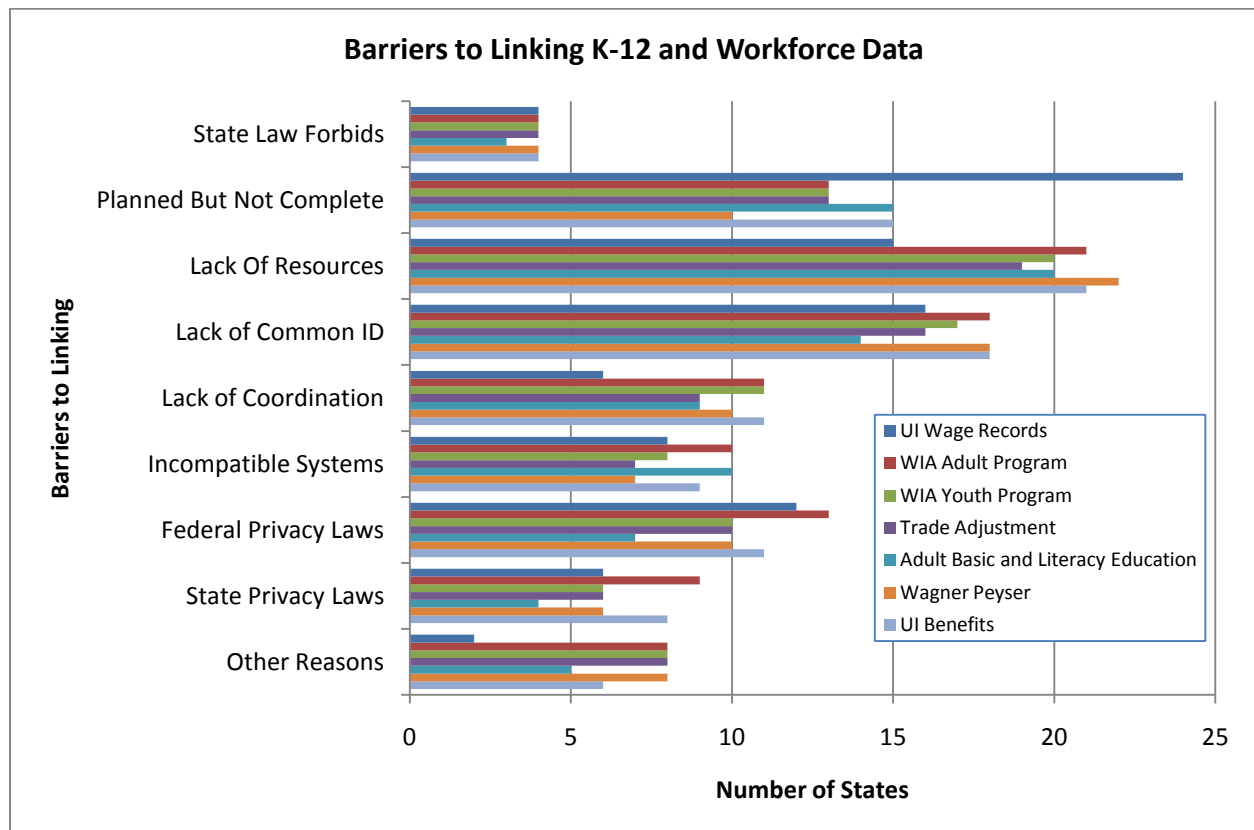
By linking education and workforce data, states increase their ability to answer new questions that affect a broader range of students.

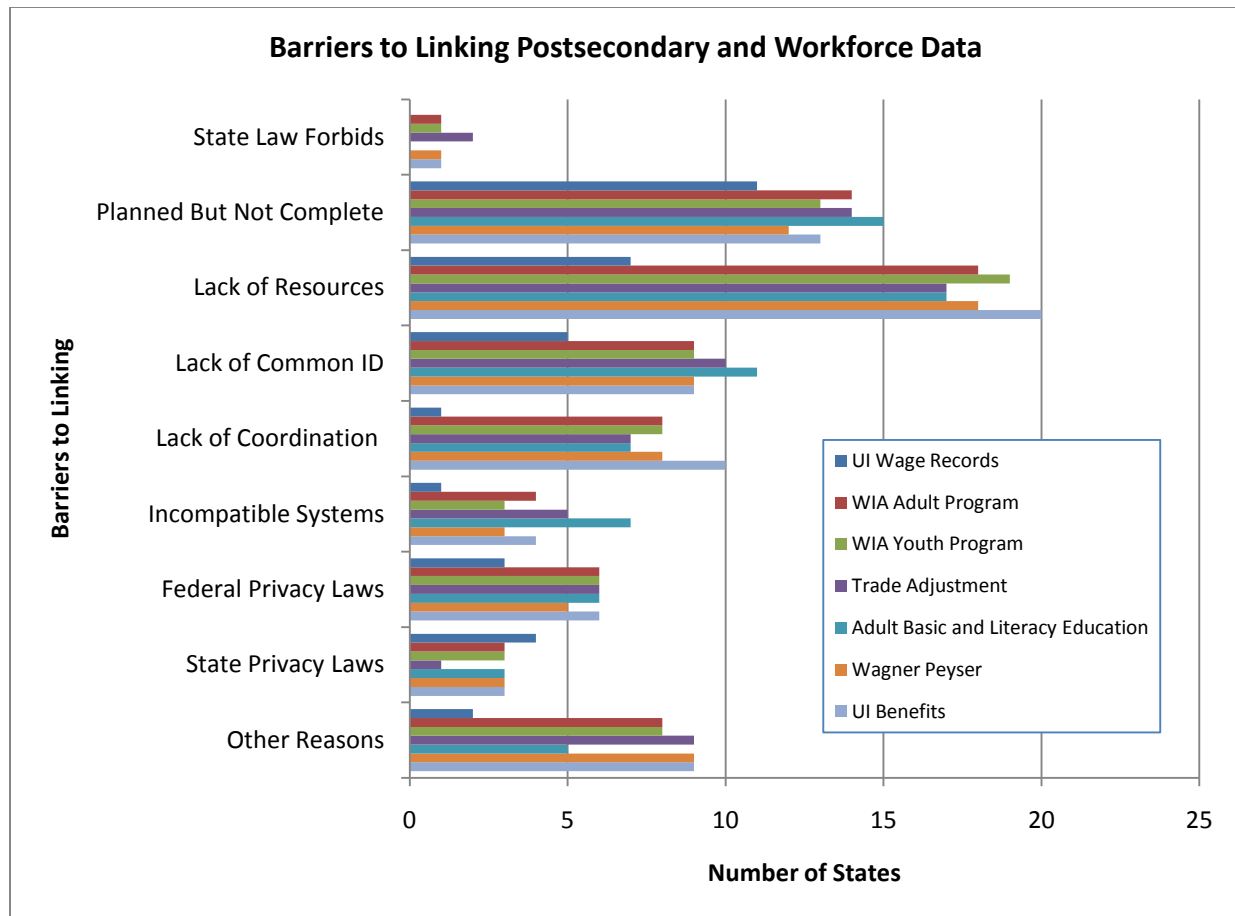
- How does participation in advanced curricular options, e.g., honors, dual credit, and Advanced Placement (AP), in high school affect workforce success?
- How do course-taking patterns differ for students who enter the workforce directly after high school and those who enter postsecondary education?
- How are employment patterns, earnings and employment stability different for dropouts and graduates with different types of graduation credentials?
- What percentage of postsecondary students enters the workforce prior to completing a credential? How do their employment patterns and earnings differ for those with a credential from those without a credential?

In addition to developing the capacity to answer these questions, states must also prioritize data access, analysis, and use.

Barriers to Linking Education and Workforce Data

While progress has been made on linking education and workforce data, much work remains to be done to ensure robust links between and amongst the K-12, postsecondary and workforce sectors. States have identified several barriers to linking education and workforce data, ranging from the lack of coordination to resource constraints. Detailed information concerning these barriers is displayed in the chart below.





Next Steps

While states are currently working to connect education and workforce data, much remains to be done before the goal of having data systems that can link across the P-20/Workforce spectrum is achieved. To connect these education and workforce databases, states should engage a broad range of stakeholders to:

1. Prioritize, through broad-based stakeholder input, the critical policy questions to drive the development and use of longitudinal data systems.
2. Ensure data systems are interoperable within and across agencies and states by adopting or developing common data standards, definitions and language.
3. Protect personally identifiable information through governance policies and practices that promote information security while allowing appropriate data access and sharing.

About the Data Quality Campaign

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement. The campaign will provide tools and resources that will help states implement and use longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focused on improving data quality, access and use.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is the DQC's founding funder; additional support has been provided by the Casey Family Programs, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.