



Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Strategic Planning Elements

2020-2023

IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
PUBLIC LAW 113-128

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Table of Contents

Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis	4
California Workforce Development Board.....	4
Local Workforce Development Boards	4
Employment Development Department	5
Employment Training Panel	5
California Community Colleges	7
California State Board of Education and Department of Education	7
Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development.....	8
Department of Rehabilitation	9
CalWORKs	10
CalFresh Employment & Training (E&T).....	11
Department of Industrial Relations – Division of Apprenticeship Standards	11
Department of Child Support Services.....	12
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	12
WIOA Section 166 - Indian/Native American Programs	13
WIOA Section 167 - Farmworker Service Programs.....	14
Job Corps	16
Jobs for Veterans State Grant	16
State Strategic Vision and Goals	19
Need for High Road Workforce Development Agenda.....	19
Principles of a High Road Workforce Development Agenda	21
Implementing a High Road Workforce Development Agenda	23
Policy Objectives	26
Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment.....	26
Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians.....	27
Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services.....	28
Assessment	29
Current Workforce System-wide Assessment	29
Future Workforce System-wide Assessment	31
State Strategy.....	31

Seven State Strategies..... 31

Sector Strategies 32

Career Pathways..... 32

Regional Partnerships 33

Earn and Learn 34

Supportive Services 34

Cross System Data Capacity 35

Integrated Service Delivery 35

Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

Below is an overview of key workforce and education activities, the client populations served by the activities, and an assessment of the strengths and opportunities of the programs and departments that participate in the administration, oversight, and policy development of the activities.

California Workforce Development Board

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) is the Governor's agent for the development, oversight, and continuous improvement of California's workforce investment system. The members of the CWDB, which consist primarily of representatives from businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and community organizations, assist the Governor in designing a statewide plan and establishing appropriate program policy. The CWDB reports to the Governor through the Chair of the CWDB, Secretary for the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and Executive Director who provide oversight of the CWDB members and staff to ensure that policy recommendations are consistent with the Governor's vision for the state.

Clients/Service Population: The CWDB does not directly deliver services to a client population. The CWDB's primary responsibility is to set policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs and to work with WIOA core program and other state plan partners to align programs and services to build a comprehensive system.

Strengths: Over the last several years CWDB has improved policy coordination and program alignment with WIOA core programs and other state plan partners at the state and local level.

Opportunities: The CWDB can increase its internal capacity for engaging with state agencies in the climate resilience arena in order to ensure a just transition for workers in climate-impacted industries.

Local Workforce Development Boards

The state workforce development system is comprised of 45 Local Workforce Development Areas (Local Area), each with its own business-led Local Workforce Development Board (Local Board). Local Boards focus on strategy and, in partnership with the Governor and chief local elected officials, facilitate public-private partnerships that support sector strategies and career pathways. They work to advance opportunities for all workers, create access to available skilled labor for business, foster innovation and ensure streamlined operations and service delivery excellence.

Critical to their charge is their oversight of the local America's Job Centers of California (AJCC) which are the hub of the statewide service delivery vehicle for workforce, education, and business services. Workforce funds allocated to Local Boards support the job training, placement, and business services delivered through the AJCCs. These AJCCs, through

partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies, education and economic development organizations provide services vital to the social and economic well-being of their communities.

Clients/Service Population: Local Boards provide services annually to millions of adult, dislocated worker, youth, and universal access clients through the AJCCs and California Job Openings Browse System (CalJOBSSM) labor exchange system. Local Boards assist an estimated 65,000 businesses annually in the hiring and retention of skilled workers.

Strengths: Local Boards have experience braiding resources and integrating service delivery through the AJCC system. Local Boards also have connections to their local communities, and have experience with administering state and local led regional initiatives, including sector and career pathway strategies

Opportunities: Local Boards can increase client access to training and education programs that align with regional labor market dynamics, including apprenticeship programs and career pathway programs that grant “stackable” credentials.

Employment Development Department

The Employment Development Department (EDD) administers WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser, Labor Market Information Division, Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave, Unemployment Insurance (UI), Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, among other programs. EDD is also California’s major tax collection agency, administering the audit and collection of payroll taxes and maintaining the employment records for more than 17 million California workers. One of the largest departments in state government, handling over \$90 billion annually, EDD has nearly 7,300 employees providing services at more than 200 locations throughout the state.

Clients/Service Population: EDD processes millions of initial unemployment insurance claims per year, over half a million disability insurance claims, and provides job services to 1.5 million people through Wagner-Peyser programs. EDD also administers programs that are targeted towards youth, people with disabilities, veterans, and workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports.

Strengths: CalJOBSSM-- EDD’s online labor exchange system--is accessible to both employers and job seekers throughout the state. CalJOBSSM contains over half a million job listings and is accessed by more than a million job seekers every year.

Opportunities: EDD is continuing to work to more fully integrate Wagner-Peyser staff into the AJCC system and comply with mandatory partnership requirements pertaining to how UI recipients are served.

Employment Training Panel

The Employment Training Panel (ETP) is a statewide business-labor incumbent worker training and economic development program. ETP supports economic development in California through strategic partnerships with business, labor, and government, and through the provision

of financial assistance to California businesses to support customized worker training programs that attract and retain skilled workers and businesses; provide workers with secure jobs that pay good wages and have opportunities for advancement; assist employers to successfully compete in the global economy; and promote the benefits and ongoing investment in employee training among employers.

Clients/Service Population: ETP serves over 400 employers a year and 60,000 incumbent workers who receive training. To date, ETP has provided approximately \$1.6 billion for the successful training and employment retention of over 1.2 million workers employed by over 84,000 California businesses.

Strengths: The “pay-for-performance” nature of ETP contracts helps facilitate close to an 80 percent retention rate for trained employees, resulting in both layoff aversion and business expansion. ETP’s contracts follow a pay-for-performance model, where employers earn funds as they complete employee training and retention benchmarks. ETP’s program is strong in employer engagement, with businesses developing their own customized training programs, and with ETP’s extensive outreach to, and participation of, their stakeholder employers. ETP also has strong relationships with the California Community Colleges (CCC), trade associations, and labor unions across the state. ETP is also currently developing a new computer system for both staff and customer use which will modernize their program.

Opportunities: ETP recognizes the need to focus more strategically on career pathways and industry sector engagement. ETP also has the goals of increasing their strategic partnerships with other state agencies including the CWDB, and with streamlining and modernizing their program requirements.

California Community Colleges

California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) is the state agency for providing administration and direction for the CCC postsecondary Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, including the apprenticeship and the adult education programs. The Workforce and Economic Development Division (WEDD), within the CCCCCO, is responsible for administration and program oversight of postsecondary CTE programs, including the apprenticeship, the adult education programs, and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (referred to as Perkins V). The Division's portfolio consists of the Strong Workforce Program, California Adult Education Program, California Apprenticeship Initiative, Nursing, and the Economic Workforce Development Program.

Clients/Service Population: California's 115 community colleges offer 350 different fields of study, 8000 certificate programs, and 4,500 associate degree programs. More than a quarter of the state's 2.1 million community college students enroll in a community college CTE course.

Strengths: Community colleges offer low-cost education programs that are accessible to the public, including populations with barriers to employment. Many community colleges have strong partnerships with Local Boards and locally administered CalWORKs programs. The CCCCCO investments are guided by the Vision for Success, a bold strategic plan with clear priorities and goals. The CCCCCO also has a regional model that is designed to address the diverse communities and their workforce needs across the state. The regional model and employer engagement focus allows the CCC to better align programs and curricula with regional labor markets, build stronger regional partnerships, and provide more robust supportive services. Community colleges also have a variety of programs designed to serve populations with barriers to employment including Disabled Student Programs and Services, CalWORKs, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education Program, Foster and Kinship Care Education and Foster Youth Success Initiatives.

Opportunities: The CCCCCO's set of broad reforms underway has create an environment where campuses are carefully examining the student journey and changing how supports and services are designed and offer to increase retention, completion, transfer and achieving employment goals. Strengthening employer engagement activities, and conversations on competency-based education and credentials attainment, as well as the intention to better align career pathways between K12 and CCC will further improve student outcomes and sustainability of CTE programs.

California State Board of Education and Department of Education

The State Board of Education (SBE) is the K-12 policy-making body for academic standards, curriculum, instructional materials, assessments and accountability. The SBE adopts instructional materials for use in grades kindergarten through eight. The SBE also adopts regulations to implement a wide variety of programs created by the Legislature, such as charter schools, and special education. In addition, the SBE has the authority to grant local education agency requests for waivers of certain provisions of the state Education Code, and acts on petitions to unify or reorganize school district boundaries. Finally, the SBE is officially the

designated “State Education Agency” that is charged with providing policy guidance to the state and local education agencies regarding federal education policies and programs such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Perkins V, WIOA, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The California Department of Education (CDE) is the administrative and oversight body for K-12 programs, including CTE and adult education and literacy programs in California. Four divisions within the CDE have program responsibilities associated, directly and/or indirectly, with WIOA. These divisions include the Career and College Transition Division, the Special Education Division, the English Learner and Support Division, and the Coordinated Student Support Division.

Clients/Service Population: Transition services are provided to 137,000 Students with Disabilities statewide, including 94,000 served by WorkAbility 1 programs; 18,314 at-risk students are served through county-run juvenile justice facilities and county community schools; over three-quarters of a million students are served under adult education including basic skills, English Language Acquisition, CTE, Adults with Disabilities, and family literacy programs. CDE also oversees CTE programs serving 970,000 secondary students and 59,000 adult CTE students.

Strengths: In both adult education and CTE, there is a focus on regional collaboration including K–12 programs, adult education, community college non-credit and credit programs, and partnerships with higher education to develop and integrate standards-based academics with career-relevant, industry-themed pathways and work-based learning opportunities that are aligned to high-need, high-growth, or emerging regional economic sectors. The CDE has also developed a strong community of practice related to secondary transitions and has integrated work-based learning approaches for students with disabilities; ensured WIOA Title II grantees have the flexibility to match curriculum with the goals and objectives of other WIOA funded programs; and implemented an evaluation process for the Coordinated Student Support programs.

Opportunities: Access to supportive services for students such as counseling, childcare, and transportation services could be addressed by better coordination at the state, local, and regional level between programs overseen by CDE, human service programs, and other workforce and education programs. CDE also lacks common student identifiers across educational segments which creates obstacles to data matching and tracking individuals into the labor market.

Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development

The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) serves as the State of California’s leader for job growth and economic development efforts. GO-Biz offers a range of services to business owners including: attraction, retention and expansion services, site selection, permit streamlining, clearing of regulatory hurdles, small business assistance, international trade development, assistance with state government, and much more.

Clients/Service Population: GO-Biz works directly with businesses to help organizations understand opportunities to start, maintain, and grow operations in California. This assistance includes, but is not limited to: site selection, permit assistance, international trade development, connectivity to strategic partnerships, information on incentive programs, and referrals to local and state business assistance resources. In addition to direct business assistance, GO-Biz also administers and supports programs led by regional business assistance and economic development organizations.

Strengths: Through its direct interactions with California businesses of all sizes and industry sectors, GO-Biz helps businesses communicate their workforce development needs to the ETP, Local Boards, educational institutions, and training providers. In conjunction with its local, regional and state partners, GO-Biz connects businesses with workforce needs to applicable resources. In collaboration with the network of workforce programs and institutions, GO-Biz assists in elevating the demands for the needed talent pipeline for our current and future employers and in identifying the emerging needs of future industries. GO-Biz's business engagement allows early recognition of the emerging workforce needs for the future and advances those needs to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, local partner organizations, and educational systems to develop the necessary skills to create the workforce of the future.

Opportunities: GO-Biz has the opportunity to increase its reach to a wider audience of business, education and training partners and to coordinate business assistance activities with state, regional and local partners.

Department of Rehabilitation

The mission of Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities in California. The DOR administers the largest vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in the country and delivers VR services to persons with disabilities in offices throughout the state so that persons with disabilities may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. In addition, DOR has cooperative agreements with state and local agencies (secondary and postsecondary education, mental health, and welfare) to provide services to consumers. The DOR operates under a federal Order of Selection (OOS) process, which gives priority to persons with the most significant disabilities.

Persons with disabilities who are eligible for DOR's VR services may be provided a full range of services, including vocational assessment, assistive technology, vocational and educational training, job placement, supported employment and independent living skills training to maximize their ability to live and work independently within their communities. The DOR provides career counseling and information and referral services to encourage individuals working in non-competitive, non-integrated settings to work toward and achieve competitive integrated employment.

Client/Service Population: In federal fiscal year 2019, DOR provided a range of VR services to approximately 111,000 individuals with disabilities, of which approximately 29,600 were students with disabilities. The disability types of those individuals determined eligible for VR services includes: 4,900 who were blind or visually impaired; 6,500 with cognitive disabilities; 15,100 with learning disabilities; 13,600 with intellectual or developmental disabilities; 5,600 deaf or hard of hearing individuals; 16,100 with physical disabilities; 25,700 with psychiatric disabilities; 1,100 with traumatic brain injury; and 1,900 individuals with other disabilities.

Strengths: DOR employs qualified VR professionals and paraprofessionals who work with individuals with disabilities to find a career track with upward mobility offering sustainable living wages. The VR professionals are trained in assessment, career planning, job placement, and assistive technology services to meet the employment needs of eligible individuals with disabilities. DOR utilizes a consumer-centered approach to service delivery by employing VR professionals and VR paraprofessionals to deliver effective and timely consumer services throughout the state, including students with disabilities. DOR also maintains a network of partnerships with community-based disability organizations and other public agencies, including high schools, community colleges, universities, and county mental health agencies to provide a greater range of employment services and opportunities to DOR consumers than would otherwise be available through any single agency.

Opportunities: Under federal law, VR programs must redirect 15 percent of funds from traditional VR services to pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. There is an active risk that DOR will not have sufficient funds and human resources to provide VR services to all individuals with significant disabilities who apply for services. The DOR has been operating under an OOS process since September 1995. Insufficient funding may mean further limiting the OOS and access to VR services.

CalWORKs

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is a part of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and operates in all fifty-eight counties providing temporary cash assistance to meet basic family needs and welfare-to-work services to help families become self-sufficient. CalWORKs programs are able to provide a wide array of services, including education and training, ancillary supportive services such as childcare and transportation support, and help with domestic violence and substance abuse issues.

Clients/Service Population: The CalWORKs caseload is approximately 530,000 cases, which equates to about 1.2 million Californians. Approximately 270,000 of these cases are eligible for welfare-to-work programs.

Strengths: CalWORKs has a robust subsidized employment program and has substantial flexibility in the types of services it can provide. CalWORKs has an existing relationship with community colleges to provide support for CalWORKs recipients enrolled in academic and career pathway programs. While maintaining the work-first policies of TANF, recent changes in CalWORKs have increased the emphasis towards a work-focused, skills attainment, and barrier

removal agenda to ensure that TANF recipients are positioned to achieve long-term successful outcomes and upward mobility.

Opportunities: CalWORKs serves a higher percentage of needy families than the rest of the nation. CalWORKs is designed primarily to combat child poverty by continuing to aid children even when the adults cannot (e.g., due to time limits or exemptions) or do not participate in the welfare-to-work program. CalWORKs serves many exempt adults with significant barriers to employment.

CalFresh Employment & Training (E&T)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training program (CalFresh E&T) is a state-supervised program of employment and training services offered voluntarily at the county level to CalFresh recipients. CalFresh E&T's strategic goals are focused around a central vision to increase the employment and earning capacity of CalFresh recipients by maximizing their access to CalFresh E&T, supportive services, and skills and credentialing.

Client/Service Population: CalFresh E&T is made available to counties who voluntarily decide to provide CalFresh E&T services to eligible participants. Eligibility for CalFresh E&T is determined by the administering county. A participant is eligible for CalFresh E&T if they meet these requirements:

- Is a CalFresh reversal referral.
- Is an active CalFresh Recipient. Eligibility must be verified for each month of participation. In other words, you must be an active CalFresh recipient in order to receive services through CalFresh E&T.
- Is not actively receiving CalWORKs (also referred to as non-assistance CalFresh recipients).

Strengths: Counties have flexibility in designing their respective CalFresh E&T program, including who the counties partner with. Definitions and descriptions often align and are derived from WIOA language so that program alignment can be made easier at the local level.

Opportunities: The intensity of services can vary between counties resulting in lack of consistency in service quality depending on localized efforts and integrated partnership. There are also potential partners already providing E&T allowable services to eligible clients who are not able to access reimbursement funds due to contracting restrictions.

Department of Industrial Relations – Division of Apprenticeship Standards

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) - Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) administers California apprenticeship law and enforces apprenticeship standards for wages, hours, working conditions and the specific skills required for state certification as a journey person in an apprenticeable occupation. DIR-DAS promotes apprenticeship training through creation of partnerships, consults with program sponsors and monitors programs to ensure high standards for on-the-job training and supplemental classroom instruction. Through

this effort, the retiring skilled workforce is replenished with new skilled workers to keep California's economic engine running strong.

Clients/Service Population: DIR-DAS serves industry, educational institutions, government, and apprentice and journey level workers. California continues to lead the nation in apprenticeship, with 93,955 apprentices registered in 1,168 DAS-approved programs represented by 473 sponsors.

Strengths: The apprenticeship model has a proven track record of placing workers in high-wage, middle-skills career pathways. The apprenticeship system of training is efficient and cost-effective and results in higher retention rates, lower turnover, and reduced costs for recruitment of new employees. The curriculum and on-the-job training are guided by industry and meet industry needs. Apprenticeship connects employers with public education facilities for related classroom instruction.

Opportunities: The majority of existing apprenticeship programs are established for occupations in the construction and building trades. Women and minorities continue to be underrepresented in many apprenticeship programs.

Department of Child Support Services

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) works with parents, custodial and non-custodial, and legally acknowledged guardians to ensure children and families receive court-ordered financial and medical support. DCSS' mission is to promote parental responsibility to enhance the well-being of children by providing child support services to establish parentage and collect child support, with the vision that all parents are engaged in supporting their children.

Clients/Service Population: DCSS works with parents, custodial and non-custodial, and legally acknowledged guardians to ensure children and families receive court-ordered financial and medical support.

Strengths: DCSS is exploring the use of behaviorally informed interventions to improve child support outcomes by focusing on areas to improve establishment and enforcement outcomes. The areas of focus are early engagement, right-sizing orders, reliable payment, family-centered services, and potentially customizing enforcement actions to accommodate parents taking advantage of workforce activities.

Opportunities: Local county child support agencies currently have limited access to data for clients that are referred to the workforce system. Increasing access will allow staff to assist individuals with child support obligations in obtaining permanent employment.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the State. CDA contracts with the network of 33 Area Agencies on Aging, who directly manage a wide array of federal and state-funded services. The Senior Community Service Employment

Program (SCSEP) provides eligible individuals part-time, subsidized job training through community service assignments at non-profit organizations or governmental entities. SCSEP aims to foster individual economic self-sufficiency and increase the number of persons who may benefit from unsubsidized employment in both public and private sectors, as well as strengthen self-sufficiency and provide support to organizations that benefit from increased civic engagement.

Client/Service Populations: Program-eligible older workers must be residents of California, 55 years of age or older, unemployed, and have total annual family income that does not exceed 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, currently \$16,100 for an individual. Service priority is given to individuals meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Is a veteran or a spouse of a veteran
- Is 65 years of age or older
- Has a disability
- Has limited English proficiency
- Has low literacy skills
- Resides in a rural area
- Has low employment prospects
- Has failed to find employment after utilizing services under WIOA Title I
- Is homeless or at risk for homelessness

Strengths: California is the most populous state in the country and has the highest number of SCSEP-eligible older individuals. Demographic shifts in the population mean that the demand for SCSEP services will likely increase. As the only federally mandated job training program targeted towards serving low-income workers age 55 years and older, SCSEP serves a dual purpose as a training program for low-income older workers and a source of subsidized staff trainees for community-based organizations. The Master Plan for Aging (MPA) outlines five bold goals and 23 strategies to build a California for all by 2023. One of the strategies is focused on preventing age discrimination and supporting the inclusion of older adults and people with disabilities in the workplace.

Opportunities: California's SCSEP has insufficient funding to support the program's allocated positions due to the disparity between the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour and the California state minimum wage of \$14.00 per hour. State minimum wage increases have reduced or modified the number of CDA's allocated SCSEP positions by 51 percent, further destabilizing the program, reducing service capacity, and serving fewer older adults.

WIOA Section 166 - Indian/Native American Programs

The WIOA Section 166 Indian/Native American (INA) Program supports employment and training activities for Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people, helping more fully develop their academic, occupational and literacy skills to help them compete more effectively in the job market and achieve personal and economic self-sufficiency. There are eight WIOA Section 166 INA Employment and Training grantees in California that receive funding to provide services to Indian and other Native American populations in California.

Clients/Service Population: WIOA Section 166 INA Program serves Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians who are unemployed, or underemployed, or low-income individuals, or a recipient of a lay-off notice.

Strengths: The INA programs promote the economic and social development of Indian communities. Services are provided in a culturally appropriate manner, consistent with the principles of Indian self-determination.

Opportunities: The funding allocated to INA programs is insufficient to meet the needs of the population and improvements can be made in relation to co-enrolling the INA population through the AJCC system. Many INA grantees are located in rural areas and lack access to technology and support services, including transportation.

WIOA Section 167 - Farmworker Service Programs

The National Farmworker Jobs Program is a nationally-directed, locally-administered program of employment and training services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Created under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and currently authorized under WIOA Section 167, the program seeks to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) who depend primarily on seasonal jobs in California's agricultural sector. There are five WIOA Section 167 farmworker service programs represented statewide by La Cooperativa Campesina de California.

These programs provide services throughout California but especially in rural areas where farmworkers live and work. Training services include English as a Second Language, General Education Development, adult and family literacy, basic education, vocational education, and employer-based training. Related services such as childcare, transportation, emergency services, housing, counseling, job placement, and follow-up services enhance these training efforts.

Clients/Service Population: WIOA Section 167 grantees serve eligible migrant/seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. Eligible farmworkers are those individuals who primarily depend on employment in agricultural labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment and underemployment.

Strengths: WIOA Section 167 grantees have well-developed relationships with Local Boards and the AJCC system, provide occupational skills training, related supportive services, and housing assistance to the MSFW population. Many Section 167 grantees also list programs on the State Eligible Training Provider List and receive referrals from AJCCs.

Opportunities: The funding allocated to MSFW programs is insufficient to meet the needs of the population and many MSFWs have limited English language capacity and do not have access to supportive services, including transportation and child care, which limits opportunities for them to attain skills, credentials, and degrees from the “mainstream” educational system.

Job Corps

Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for at-risk youth, ages 16 through 24. Through a nationwide network of campuses, Job Corps offers a comprehensive array of career development services to prepare young people for successful careers. Job Corps employs a holistic career development training approach which integrates the teaching of academic, vocational, and employability skills, as well training in social competencies, through a combination of classroom, practical and work-based learning experiences to prepare youth for stable, long-term, high-paying jobs.

Clients/Service Population: Job Corps serves young men and women age 16-24 who are out of school and have barriers to employment.

Strengths: Job Corps is a comprehensive program which provides high school diploma and equivalency programs, occupational skills training, work readiness, and housing and supportive services to young men and women enrolled in the program.

Opportunities: Since Job Corps Centers are only located in some Local Areas, not all AJCCs can access and provide referrals to the services they provide.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program provides funding to state workforce agencies to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment and to assist employers fill their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans. The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists focus is on providing individualized career services through case management whereas the Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) coordinate with local business service teams and members of the community to advocate to employers on behalf of veterans and to develop job opportunities specifically for veterans.

Services are provided to veterans and eligible persons according to their individual needs. Basic career services are universally accessible and are made available to all veterans seeking employment and training services in at least one comprehensive AJCC in each Local Area. On a priority of service basis, an AJCC staff member determines the eligible person's purpose for registering. Once the veteran or other eligible person is identified, a Veteran Service Navigator conducts an initial assessment. If they are deemed a veteran with a significant barrier to employment or other special criteria, they are referred to the DVOP specialist for further assessment and individualized career services.

Clients/Service Population: In addition to the universal access and priority of services provided to all veterans, the JVSG program is intended to target the following veterans with barriers to employment:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran which are those:
 - Who are entitled to compensation under laws administered by the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs.

- Were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability
- A veteran who is homeless
- A recently-separated service member, who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months A veteran who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate
- A veteran who is low-income
- Veterans aged 18–24
- Vietnam-era Veterans
- Transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of Individualized Career Services
- Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units
- The spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members.
 - The spouse of any of the following individuals:
 - Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability
 - Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability.
 - Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.
 - Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who is listed, in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
 1. Missing in action;
 2. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
 3. Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

Strengths: Since JVSG staff are required to be veterans, they have the opportunity to build rapport with their clients and assess not only their employment needs but also additional community resources. This allows DVOPS to provide veterans with comprehensive

employment. LVERS have first-hand knowledge of the attributes a veteran can bring to a company and provide employers assistance on understanding how the veterans' military experience matches their needs.

Opportunities: JVSG is continuing to work on fully integrating the LVERs services into the Business Services platform in the AJCCs to promote hiring veterans to the employer community. In addition, DVOPS are continually working to integrate with all AJCC partners and community resources to better serve the veteran community to obtain meaningful and successful careers.

State Strategic Vision and Goals

Under the leadership of the Governor and Secretary for the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California's vision for the future of workforce development is centered on the establishment and growth of a High Road workforce system. This High Road system will be focused on meaningful industry engagement and placement of Californians in quality jobs that provide economic security. California is committed to developing a workforce system that enables economic growth and shared prosperity for employers and employees, especially those with barriers to employment, by investing in industry partnerships, job quality, and meaningful skills attainment rather than low wages, contingent employment, and minimal benefits.

Need for High Road Workforce Development Agenda

Despite positive macroeconomic indicators such as record-low unemployment and increasing economic growth as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), key economic trends such as wage stagnation and growing income inequality indicate that not all Californians were benefiting from the state's bustling pre-pandemic economy.

For instance, median hourly earnings for workers in California increased by merely one percent from 1979 to 2018 after adjusting for inflation, while low-wage workers in the 10th percentile of hourly earnings fared only slightly better, experiencing a four percent increase over the same period. As concerning as this trend is at the aggregate level, data further reveals unequal impacts among different populations in California, such as women and people of color. The figures below compare the median hourly earnings of different racial and ethnic groups relative to white workers and of women relative to men, showing marked wage disparity by race, ethnicity, and gender:

Race and ethnicity:

- Hispanic or Latino - 60 percent
- Black or African-American (non-Hispanic) - 69 percent
- American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic) – 75 percent
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic) - 75 percent
- Median hourly earnings for workers identifying as Asian are, in the aggregate, 99 percent of those of white non-Hispanic workers. However, this statistic masks considerable internal heterogeneity within this population, with recent research from the Pew Center finding that income is more widely stratified among Asians than among any other racial or ethnic group in the country.

Gender

- Women - 85 percent. The disparity is higher at the upper end of the pay scale (81 percent for women workers in the 90th percentile of earners) and lower at the bottom end of the pay scale (89 percent for women workers in the 10th percentile

of earners).

In regards to income inequality, at the aggregate level, workers in California are realizing a smaller share of the economic gains in the state over the past two decades. The share of California's state GDP going to income for worker compensation declined from about 53 percent in 2001 to around 47 percent in 2017 while the opposite is true for income going to owners of capital which increased from 41 percent in 2001 to 46 percent in 2017. This trend suggests a loss of workers' bargaining power relative to employers, which can make a lasting negative impact on California's economy and workforce.

A similar pattern of inequality appears when looking at average inflation-adjusted incomes for different California households. The bottom quintile of California households saw their average real income decrease from \$16,441 in 2006 to \$15,562 in 2018, while in the same time period the top five percent of California households experienced a significant increase in average income from \$426,851 in 2006 to \$506,421 in 2018.

Though median household income also rose from 2006 to 2018, the rate of increase was 6.4 percent, roughly one-third the growth rate for the wealthiest five percent of Californian households. When understood in the context of rising costs of living in California – for housing in particular – the modest and negative growth in average real income means greater difficulty in supporting a family and maintaining a decent quality of life.

These economic trends warrant attention and consideration on the part of the state's workforce development system given the significant consequences and repercussions throughout California's economy. Wage stagnation, for example, constrains households' ability to achieve or maintain a decent standard of living, which could push more and more Californians into poverty and deplete limited public assistance funds. Likewise, the negative effects of income inequality extend beyond a single household or population: research shows that regions that work to reduce inequality experience higher rates of economic growth for longer periods of time, suggesting that greater inequality jeopardizes growth.

Confronting an economic recovery that could potentially take years, recent research also strongly suggests the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated and amplified these long-standing health and economic inequities, leading to record unemployment rates disproportionately affecting those already at the edge of the labor market, such as young adults, women, people of color, and those with barriers to employment. These groups are typically the first to experience the effects of an economic downturn and the last to recover. For instance, Black and Hispanic or Latino Californians remain considerably more likely to be out of work. One year into the recession, 15.3 percent of Black Californians and 13 percent of Hispanic or Latino Californians were unemployed as compared to a 9.7 percent unemployment rate for white Californians. Women were also more likely to be out of work than men—a disparity correlated with mothers leaving the labor force because of remote schooling or child care responsibilities during the pandemic.

With the right combination of thought, policy, and practice California's workforce system can ensure that its programs and resources measurably improve working conditions and economic

health in California. At the least, this kind of high road workforce development agenda can avoid repeating and reinforcing existing and systemic problems affecting workers and job-seekers as we continue to build back our economy.

Principles of a High Road Workforce Development Agenda

California is committed to a high road vision for the state’s workforce development system that embodies the principles of job quality, worker voice, equity, and environmental sustainability. Implementing this vision through policy, programs, and other practices will benefit workers, job-seekers, and industry as well as the state’s workforce development system.

Job Quality

In principle, job quality aims to deliver skills for the state’s high road employers by building the skills of the existing workforce and bringing new workers to the associated industry sector(s). High road employers provide quality jobs, compete based on the quality of their services and products, invest in a skilled workforce, and engage workers and their representatives in the project of building skills and competitiveness. At a minimum, quality jobs are characterized by: family-supporting wages, benefits, safe working conditions, fair scheduling practices, and career advancement opportunities that are transparent.

In practice, job quality means strategically supporting California’s leading high road employers and connecting individuals to the greatest extent feasible to the best jobs. This includes supporting industry sectors where low-wage jobs are predominant as long as there are high road employers willing to invest in workers’ skills and/or develop career pathways.

Orienting the workforce development system toward job quality serves job seekers and workers by placing them in employment that allows them to sustain a high quality of life for themselves, their families, and broader community that depends on their earnings. It also levels the industry playing field by rewarding employers that follow the rules (e.g., no wage theft or worker misclassification) and compete based on quality and respect for those who help create value.

Lastly, job quality serves the workforce development system and broader public sector by protecting investments in training – i.e., ensuring that money spent on training workers is not lost as a result of turnover, an endemic problem in low-road industries and sectors.

Worker Voice

Worker voice is distinct from, but closely related to, job quality. It begins with a recognition of the wisdom of workers who know their jobs best and by building an industry-driven skills infrastructure where industry means both employers as well as workers and their representatives. By investing in and promoting planning with workers and management at the table, California is supporting partnerships that develop industry-led solutions to critical challenges and opportunities such as:

- Assessing current workforce gaps due to forthcoming retirements, job quality concerns, and/or insufficient training capacity;

- Addressing expected changes as a result of technology deployment including, but not limited to, automation and artificial intelligence; and
- Maintaining or increasing competitiveness in anticipation of, or in response to, market forces such as new laws and regulations as well as global trade effects.

Worker voice is also essential to workforce development policy and practice in order to ensure that investments in training and credentialing are connected to meaningful career advancement. In addition to benefitting workers and employers, career advancement is necessary to create opportunities for new, entry-level workers which is the basis for equity and inclusion within the California's high road vision.

The benefits and impact associated with worker voice are multiple and shared broadly. Workers can experience better working conditions and a greater sense of value and ownership on the job and within the firm by helping to make decisions that affect their livelihoods, both present and in the future. Individual firms and whole industry sectors benefit from development of new standards that can improve consistency in work and training and can support higher productivity. By focusing on developing robust solutions to critical issues identified by the industry, worker voice helps build a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, which is critical as industries change and advance over time.

Decision-makers and the public sector also gain from more widespread practice of joint labor-management planning and partnership, such as improved ability to manage limited resources for enforcement of employment laws (e.g., laws pertaining to wage and hour as well as health and safety) and deeper input and institutional investment in developing safeguards for workers and communities coping with disruption linked to environmental constraints, technological change, and other forces affecting employment, skills, and competitiveness.

Equity

Existing social, economic, and institutional bases of inequality mean that economic outcomes are stratified according to race, ethnicity, disability, and gender. The high road vision and agenda therefore emphasizes equity in workforce development, with the aim of systematically generating greater opportunity for Californians who have been locked out of the mainstream economy, are under-represented in high-wage occupations and industries, and/or face multiple barriers to quality employment.

Equity also means respecting and valuing the work done by immigrants, people of color, and other populations facing marginalization that is often overlooked by workforce development resources. Particularly in industries where low-wage jobs are predominant, equity strategies emphasize upskilling and professionalization that helps to standardize the work and training as well as value and compensate workers for new skills acquired through training and certification.

A number of practices are required to achieve greater equity in labor market outcomes, including increased partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs). CBOs are often grounded in and provide critical resources to marginalized communities which makes them invaluable partners in furthering an equitable high road agenda.

Environmental Sustainability

In addition to job quality, worker voice, and equity, California's high road vision for workforce development addresses issues pertaining to environmental sustainability, particularly climate change. This is based on a recognition that climate change has serious implications for the state's economy, and that the impacts of climate change disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color.

With respect to economy-wide implications, every occupation and industry – to varying degrees – is impacted by climate change and/or has an effect on the environment and climate. Moreover, California's transition to a carbon-neutral economy is reshaping whole industry sectors, including the occupations and employment within those sectors as well as the knowledge and skills required. Accordingly, high road workforce development – through sector-based high road training partnerships – considers job growth, job loss, and changes in the nature of work associated environmental change and related policies and investments. To this end, special attention must be paid to industry sectors that are on the frontlines of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy (e.g., energy generation and distribution, buildings and construction, vehicle and components manufacturing, and forestry services and agriculture) while ensuring that programs and investments continue to address workforce development economy-wide.

Implementing a High Road Workforce Development Agenda

California will employ three main strategies to operationalize these high road principles, this includes leveraging the state's power of public investment, establishing policy and providing guidance to the workforce development field, and raising awareness in multiple forums.

Public Investment in High Road

Over the last several years, California has broadened the reach and impact of our federal workforce and education funding by coupling that investment with hundreds of millions of dollars in state funds. The majority of the state funding is being awarded through competitive processes to industry-based partnerships at the local level that are operationalizing the high road model from the ground up.

A wide variety of federal, state, and locally funded programs have been weaved into the development and execution of these industry partnerships to ensure both employers and participants are receiving wrap around support. On the demand side, this includes partnering with employers, labor, trade associations, etc. On the supply side, this includes partnering with Local Boards, community colleges, adult education providers, vocational rehabilitation providers, human assistance departments, community-based organizations, etc.

While each partnership is unique and tailored to specific needs of the industry and local workforce, the main thing they all have in common is that they are shaped and driven by the following essential elements:

- **Industry-Led Problem Solving:** Foundational is that the industry – including leaders representing employers and workers – lead the problem solving for the workforce demands unique to that industry.
- **Partnerships as a Priority:** It is key to have a strong and durable industry partnership as a goal in and of itself. Here it means a formal relationship that is neither loose nor ad hoc, and instead forms the basis of sustained problem-solving.
- **Worker Wisdom:** Existing High Road projects in California have developed innovative ways to explicitly bring worker voice into their strategies and tactics as a core value undergirding the partnership.
- **Industry-Driven Education & Training Solutions:** Partnerships can tap into training that already exists, develop and deliver their own programs, or use a hybrid approach specific to their particular workforce needs.

Additionally, California state agencies outside of the traditional workforce and education system have begun to integrate fair and responsible employer standards and inclusive procurement policies into the public funding they release. This cross agency state-wide approach is helping to ensure California will have enough quality jobs to place participants into once they have received the skills and training deemed necessary by employers. Given California and the nation’s focus on climate change, much of this work has been occurring with state agencies that have responsibilities and funding related to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. However, this economic development partnership model is able to be applied to other critical industries within California, as capacity allows.

Development of High Road Policy

The second strategy emphasizes policymaking as a means to establish measures either mandating or encouraging that high road practices are implemented and meaningful outcomes are achieved. In practice, this means incorporating high road principles and practices into state legislation, as well as into the policy directives and guidance issued for the local workforce development system.

In 2020, the CWDB issued Regional and Local Planning Guidance for PY 2021-24 through [Workforce Services Directive WSD20-05](#). After engaging with key stakeholders such as employers, labor organizations, as well as WIOA core and required partners, Local Boards described how they will prioritize working with employers who provide quality jobs that provide economic security. They also spoke to how they will ensure that historically unserved and underserved communities will have equal access to the career pathways, earn and learn opportunities, supportive services, and the aforementioned quality jobs.

In 2021, Governor Newsom signed [Assembly Bill 138 \(Committee on Budget, Chapter 78,](#)

[Statutes of 2021](#)) which codified the concept of High Road into state law and tasked the CWDB with assisting the Governor in developing standards, procedures, and criteria for defining high road employers, high road jobs, high road workforce development, and high road training partnerships in California. The bill also requires CWDB to collect data on the impact and efficacy of its high road investments and report back to the Legislature on a biennial basis.

Increasing Education and Awareness of High Road

Lastly, CWDB advances the high road vision through education – by raising awareness of high road principles, practices, and programmatic successes – in order to change the culture of workforce development statewide. This is done through presentations at conferences on labor, workforce development, and education; regular and deep communication with, and technical assistance provided to, Local Boards and other practitioners; and producing reports and other educational materials for the diverse workforce development field in California.

The High Road model will only be successful system-wide if it involves meaningful engagement with adult education, vocational rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser and other WIOA program partners. California’s vision for utilizing deep industry engagement and strategic upskilling to place individuals with barriers to employment into high-quality career pathways applies across the board to all of our shared customers – people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated, veterans, immigrants and refugees, foster youth, etc. The High Road model requires a universal design and the CWDB has been working closely with the CDE, DOR, EDD and other state program partners to ensure that the funding, policy guidance, or technical assistance strategies outlined above are developed in a manner that meets the unique needs of everyone that the workforce development system is intended to serve.

Policy Objectives

California intends to use the high road workforce development agenda identified above, to advance progress on three main policy objectives. These objectives affect both state-level policy and administrative practices across programs as well as local policy and service delivery.

- Fostering demand-driven skills attainment: Workforce and education programs need to align program content with the state's industry sector needs so as to provide California's employers and businesses with the skilled workforce necessary to compete in the global economy.
- Enabling upward mobility for all Californians: Workforce and education programs need to be accessible for all Californians, especially populations with barriers to employment, and ensure that everyone has access to a marketable set of skills, and is able to access the level of education necessary to get a good job that ensures both long-term economic self-sufficiency and economic security.
- Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services: Workforce and education programs must economize limited resources to achieve scale and impact, while also providing the right services to clients, based on each client's particular and potentially unique needs, including any needs for skills development.

Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

California recognizes the critical importance of improving the workforce and education system's ability to meet the skill demands of employers in industry sectors that are driving regional employment. This includes identifying opportunities to move workers up a career ladder using targeted incumbent worker training while also moving new hires into jobs using strong employer engagement practices, relevant training investments, and supportive services.

Governor Newsom has set an aspirational goal of 500,000 apprenticeships in California by 2029. To reach the goal, the state must re-examine how state-approved apprenticeships are developed, approved, and executed, and must ensure that employers, apprenticeship training providers, and the workforce system are aligned. It is important to note that an apprenticeship is a job, therefore, to create an apprenticeship an employer must be willing to hire, and then train a worker in a structured program while also paying living wages. While federal and state funds can cover some of the expenses for establishing new earn-and-learn opportunities, the costs of on-the-job training (in non-construction apprenticeship training) are primarily borne by the employer in the form of wages paid. Therefore, any effective strategy for scaling apprenticeship must put industry at the center.

California will continue to invest in existing successful programs that have achieved a co-equal and successful labor-management approach in order to scale them up, while also creating new programs that involve meaningful partnerships between employers, workers, and the workforce system that treat each partner fairly.

Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians

California believes that diversity is a strength, and advancing equity is an economic and moral imperative. Creating a workforce and education system that provides upward mobility for all Californians benefits the economy and fulfills the state's promise to recognize the ability of everyone who lives here to participate and thrive. In order to ensure that everyone has access to a marketable set of skills and the level of training necessary to get a job that provides long-term economic security, the services provided must be centered on each individual's unique needs.

For some individuals served by the workforce system, especially dislocated workers with an in-demand skillset, finding a good job may require only access to information about which employers are hiring in their Local Area or region. However, California recognizes that individuals with significant barriers to employment may need multiple interventions and access to a variety of services provided over an extended period of time in order to find and enter a good job. In alignment with the Governor's priorities, California will continue to support the provision of wraparound services for individuals with barriers to employment, with an increased emphasis on the following populations.

Immigrants

Immigrants, regardless of status, contribute significantly to California's robust and growing economy. Immigrants comprise over one third of California's workforce and undocumented immigrants represent one in ten of California's workers. However, immigrants are particularly susceptible to forces barring them from economic opportunity. Common barriers include language access, childcare and transportation services, work authorization requirements, and the cultural competency of staff. Consequently, the state workforce and education system must acknowledge, value and invest in the full potential of the immigrant community by expanding investments in education, workforce, and supportive services that are open to everyone, regardless of status.

Justice-Involved

California releases approximately 36,000 people from the state prison each year, a portion of whom have received in-prison job-training rehabilitative services. Individuals involved with the justice system face significant barriers obtaining economic mobility and can benefit from increased collaboration between the education, training, workforce development, and community-based systems to enhance reentry employment opportunities. While there is some, often informal, coordination between the corrections and workforce system, a formal and sustained relationship is needed to better integrate services operating in isolation, and to fill gaps and provide holistic and long-term outcomes to reduce recidivism.

Homeless or Housing-Insecure

California is facing a homelessness epidemic across the state. According to the 2020 Homeless Point in Time count, more than half of the 44 Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) in the state reported double-digit increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness. While

additional state resources have been allocated to stem the increase in homelessness, opportunities to deliver a comprehensive cross-system response remain. For people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, creating a continuity of services between workforce and CoC programs could provide the critical link necessary for long-term stability and success.

Youth

The California unemployment rate in 2021 among youth ages 16 to 24 was 10 percent. For youth with multiple barriers to employment, this puts them at even greater risk of poverty and widening income inequality. Culturally competent interventions, trauma-informed care, and a whole-person or family approach to system alignment across all safety-net programs, presents a clear opportunity for effectively reducing disparities among youth. Additionally, systems of care must be responsive to the diverse emotional, psychosocial, and behavioral needs of youth, especially those who have interacted with multiple systems in order to increase the likelihood of positive employment outcomes and to effectively tackle generational poverty.

Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

California is experiencing fundamental shifts as a result of rapid advancements in technology along with the demands of combatting climate change. This has prompted California to reimagine how government can align its workforce and training programs at the state level to economize limited resources and create a pipeline of qualified workers for the jobs of the future.

Governor Newsom is engaged in collaborative conversations with the Legislature and other state leaders on a proposal to better align workforce services and training programs through the establishment of a new department centered on the following standards:

- Equity – Despite productivity gains and increased prosperity over the last 40 years, we have also witnessed a steady deterioration of job quality and an abiding sense of economic insecurity. We can help shape the future of work in a proactive way, formulating new policies for connecting workers, students, and jobseekers – regardless of race, gender, disability, economic background, or prior education - with a chance at reskilling, upskilling, and training for something better.
- Efficiency – Workforce development programs are currently too fragmented across state government and reactive in nature to achieve sufficient scale and impact. Bringing current resources, programs, and training together in a well-coordinated system will enhance their impact. The plan calls for unifying these four organizations under one proactive vision:
 - California Workforce Development Board
 - Employment Development Department’s Workforce Services Branch
 - Employment Training Panel
 - Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards

- Customer Service – Both job seekers and employers today face a system of services that can be time-consuming and difficult to navigate. The proposed new department would be intended to benefit all by actively engaging employers big and small, expanding apprenticeship opportunities, and creating easy-to-navigate job seeker assistance among other innovative workforce approaches.

Assessment

Current Workforce System-wide Assessment

The Cross-Systems Analytics and Assessment for Learning and Skills Attainment (CAAL-Skills) program serves as the main tool for assessing the overall effectiveness of the state workforce development system. CAAL-Skills is an interagency and multi-departmental data-sharing and program-evaluation initiative led by CWDB that utilizes the common performance measures to evaluate the outcomes associated with California’s investment in workforce development, training, related education and supportive service programs.

Current data sharing partners include:

- Department of Industrial Relations-Division of Apprenticeship Standards
- Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office
- Employment Training Panel
- Department of Social Services
- Employment Development Department
- Department of Education
- Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Department of Rehabilitation
- Pilot counties

The data system includes participant-level information that is used to systematically link individuals across the workforce system and participating programs. The program has developed a pooled administrative data set which can also be used to evaluate and assess participating programs’ efficacy so that program administrators and policymakers can develop evidence-based and data-driven policies to improve program participant outcomes.

For each program in the CAAL-Skills database, participant data is collected on the following variables:

- Participant characteristics, including demographic information (age, gender, race,

ethnicity); veteran status; and existence of employment barriers (disabilities; cultural, linguistic, literacy or income barriers; and ex-offender status).

- Treatment(s) received: type of service (whether career, training, or supportive; and by within-category disaggregation) and whether the participant received a combination of services.
- Location(s) where service(s) were received.
- Time of program entry, exit, and (if applicable) training completion.
- Whether a participant obtained a recognized credential(s) within one year of exit, and type(s) of credential obtained.

Participant data is then associated to employer-provided data in the Unemployment Insurance base wage file, to generate additional information on participant outcomes, including:

- Participant employment status two and four quarters after program exit.
- Participant earnings two and four quarters after program exit.
- The industry sector in which that participant was employed, two and four quarters after exit.

The pooling of participant data among the data-sharing partners also provides information on the frequency, extent, and patterns of participation in multiple workforce education and training programs.

Finally, availability of pre-treatment earning information is expected to provide a more rigorous baseline with which to assess changes to earnings following workforce program participation.

California Policy Lab Evaluation Using CAAL-Skills Data

The CWDB has engaged the University of California Regents (working under the name of California Policy Lab) to perform a statistically rigorous evaluation and assessment of California's workforce system partners as required by WIOA Section 116.

The California Policy Lab evaluation will use data in the CAAL-Skills database to assess if and how particular workforce programs and services are associated with improvements in labor market outcomes. The non-experimental evaluation will utilize methods of control to rigorously estimate impacts from program participation itself, eliminating or reducing the effect of confounding factors (such as unmeasured differences between participants). The evaluation may additionally reveal whether impacts differ for different participant groups (e.g. by gender, race, disability etc.), which may provide information on the effectiveness of the workforce system in reducing or eliminating barriers.

Using CAAL-Skills data and associated evaluations, the state will assess the extent to which specific workforce programs and services mitigate such inequalities (or fail to), and identify the

specific barriers to access, completion, or success, that participants face, in addition to evaluating performance on statewide measures in WIOA Section 116.

Future Workforce System-wide Assessment

Besides the current and ongoing assessment efforts outlined above, California will explore ways to objectively assess implementation of its High Road workforce development agenda.

Potential indicators of success or measurements of progress could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- California’s capacity to grow sector-based, high road training partnerships - Evaluation criteria could focus on measurable outcomes for workers. Examples include: retention, wage progression, job quality; for employers (productivity gains, reduction in turnover); and durability and scalability of partnerships themselves.
- California’s impact on industry standards - Evaluation criteria could focus on positive within-industry changes that result from expansion of the high road model within an industry. Examples include: growth in prevailing wage levels and improvements to scheduling predictability, benefits, safety standards, etc.
- California’s ability to improve equity through participant outcomes - Evaluation criteria could focus on investment in retraining and creation of meaningful career pathways for workers who are currently employed in sectors which produce environmental pollution as well as for low-income communities and communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. Examples include: training and job placement benchmarks for persons of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, and refugees.

State Strategy

In order to ensure ongoing alignment between the various government agencies that are responsible for administration of the state’s workforce and education system, the CWDB and its state partners will utilize the following seven strategies to frame, align, and guide program coordination at the state, regional, and local levels.

Seven State Strategies

1. Sector Strategies
2. Career Pathways
3. Regional Partnerships
4. Earn and Learn
5. Supportive Services
6. Creating Cross-System Data Capacity

7. Integrated Service Delivery

These seven policy strategies are evidence-based and have been shown to ensure effective delivery of services and increase the likelihood that those who receive services obtain gainful employment. The information below provides the overarching policy rationale for each of the strategies, concrete examples of how the strategies will be implemented throughout the state will vary from partner to partner. For that reason, California chose to establish bilateral partnership agreements among WIOA core and required program partners, such as vocational rehabilitation and adult education, which detail concrete goals associated with each of the strategies. Those objectives are outlined under the operational elements portion of the plan.

California will use vehicles such as the partnership agreements, joint taskforces, joint listening sessions, joint policy development, and ongoing conversations to ensure that the strategies identified are implemented in a way that provides integrated access to our shared customers – people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated, veterans, immigrants and refugees, foster youth, etc.

Sector Strategies

Sector strategies are policy initiatives designed to promote the economic growth and development of a state's competitive industries using strategic workforce investments to boost labor productivity. The strategic focus is on prioritizing investments where overall economic returns are likely to be highest, specifically in those sectors that will generate significant gains in terms of jobs and income.

Targeting the right sectors is essential and requires that policymakers use economic and labor market data to determine which industry sectors are best positioned to make gains if investments in workforce development are made. Investment decisions are typically also contingent on the degree to which a sector faces critical workforce supply problems, for example, whether the industry faces or will face a shortage of skilled workers in a particular occupation, whether these shortages are a consequence of either growth or retirements.

A key element of sector strategies is the emphasis on industry and sector partnerships. These partnerships bring together multiple employers within a sector to find shared solutions to their common workforce problems. When done successfully, sector strategies can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for business, labor, and the state by increasing competitiveness and growth, improving worker employability and income, and reducing the need for social services while also bolstering government revenues generated by both business and workers.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are designed to facilitate incremental and progressive skills attainment over time, in clearly segmented blocks, such that those who move through the pathway obtain education or training services built on the foundation of prior learning efforts. The objective is to provide a packaged skill set which has demonstrable labor market value at each stage of the learning process. Key elements of successful pathway programs include the following:

- Varied and flexible means of entry, exit, and participation through multiple “on and off

ramps” and innovative scheduling practices.

- Entry and exit points are based on student, worker, or client needs as well as educational or skill levels, allowing those with different skill levels to participate where appropriate.
- Flexible exit allows those who cannot complete a longer term program the ability to build longer term skills through short term serial training efforts.
- Pathways programs are characterized by a high degree of program alignment and service coordination among relevant agencies, which can typically include adult education and basic skills programs, community colleges CTE programs, high school CTE programs, workforce development board programs, as well as social services agencies.
- The receipt of industry-valued credentials at each stage of training.
- Employer engagement to ensure that training and education are relevant to the labor market.

Career pathways programs are particularly useful in serving populations with barriers to employment because they can be packaged in a way that responds to population needs. Combining career pathway programs with sector strategies has the potential to help move populations with barriers to employment into the labor force while also meeting employer’s workforce needs, by providing disadvantaged individuals with a tangible and marketable skillset that is in-demand. For example, apprenticeships can provide industry-driven, high-quality career pathways where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential.

Regional Partnerships

Labor markets and industry are both organized regionally. Organizing workforce and education programs regionally increases the likelihood that workforce and education programs can be aligned to serve the needs of labor markets. Regional organizing efforts should aim for the development of value-added partnerships that not only help achieve the policy goals of the partnership but also help partners achieve their organizational goals.

Regional partnerships can be mutually beneficial when they are set up to leverage each partner program’s core competencies and subject matter expertise. When shaped in this manner, regionally organized programs economize the use of scarce resources, while also allowing program operators to take programs to scale, reduce administrative costs, and package and coordinate services on the basis of specialization.

The objective of regional organizing efforts is not to create monolithic one-size-fits-all uniform workforce and education programs, but rather to coordinate service delivery on the basis of program strengths while also aligning partner programs with each region’s particular labor market needs. The exact manner in which these partnerships come together will vary from

region to region based on the unique set of circumstances that shape each region's workforce needs.

Earn and Learn

Earn and learn policies are designed to facilitate skills attainment while also providing those participating in these programs with some form of compensated work experience, allowing them to "earn" income while they "learn" to do a job. Because many WIOA customers have barriers to employment and cannot afford to attend an education or training program full time because time spent in the classroom reduces time that can be spent earning income, earn and learn opportunities are an important strategy for success.

These programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Apprenticeships
- Pre-apprenticeships
- Incumbent worker training
- Transitional and subsidized employment
- Paid internships and externships
- Project-based compensated learning

The principles of earn and learn are broad enough to allow for flexible program design. As such, programs may be customized to serve clients on the basis of their given level of skills and their particular educational or training needs. Transitional and subsidized employment programs can be used to provide work experience to those who have none, facilitating the hiring of individuals that employers might not otherwise employ. Incumbent worker training serves the purpose of keeping the state's workforce productive and its businesses competitive. Similarly, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs can provide access to formal skills training opportunities in a variety of occupational fields that typically provide good wages and a middle class income.

Supportive Services

Evidence suggests that skill-training programs accrue substantial and long-term benefits to job-seekers, particularly to women, low-skilled workers, workers with an outdated skill set and workers with other barriers to employment. However, many of the clients served by the state's workforce and education programs face barriers to employment that also undermine their ability to complete a training or educational program which could help them upskill or reskill in a manner that increases their labor market prospects. Individuals often need access to a broad array of ancillary services in order to complete training or education programs and successfully enter the labor market.

Supportive services provided through the state's workforce and education programs include everything from academic and career counseling, to subsidized childcare and dependent care, to transportation vouchers, to payment for books, uniforms, and course equipment, to

substance abuse treatment, as well as benefits planning and assistive technology for people with disabilities. Supportive services may also include licensing fees, legal assistance, housing assistance, emergency assistance, and other needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in career and training services.

The combination of supportive services provided should depend on each particular individual's needs and background, as well as the eligibility criteria for various programs. The exact menu of services offered to program participants will vary from region to region and locality to locality, but should always be centered on what is best for the individual.

Cross System Data Capacity

Diagnostic data is intended to steer investment to help ensure that programs align with labor market trends and needs by looking at patterns of job growth as well as aggregate education and training program output with respect to the number of degrees and certificates received and industry-recognized credentials awarded. Performance data is intended to measure typical program outcomes for individuals receiving services while helping quantify skills attainment and degree and credential production. The following types of data are used to guide the design and evaluation of workforce and education programs in California:

- Diagnostic data pertaining to the relative importance of the different industries, sectors, and occupations throughout California.
- Diagnostic data analyzing the extent to which state education and training programs are preparing students and workers with the requisite industry-recognized skills and credentials to meet employer's skills needs and future industry demand for trained workers in relevant sectors and occupations across the state's regions.
- Performance data on workforce and education programs, including required WIOA performance data.
- Impact analyses and return on investment studies that allow one to assess the value of the state's workforce and education programs, as well as the ability to track outcomes longitudinally to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of career pathways.

Integrated Service Delivery

Integrated service delivery is when multiple partners work together to collaborate and coordinate their support, services and interventions. The focus is generally on individuals, or target groups, who have complex needs that require services from a variety of partners. Integrated services delivery also results in program alignment and provides access to the broad array of services funded across the state's workforce and education programs. This approach supports the workforce systems' ability to focus on skills development, attainment of industry recognized credentials and degrees, and prioritization of career pathways in high-demand, high pay sectors.

Integrated service delivery also provides staff with the flexibility to provide customized services based on the needs of the job seeker. Services should provide job-seeking individuals with skills

and supports necessary for successful participation in education and training programs that lead to employment in in-demand occupations. This can occur in a variety of ways depending on the needs of both employers and the client base in each regional and Local Area.