MEMO: Labor & Workforce Development Agency Priorities for Expanding the Cradle-to-Career Data System

To: Mary Ann Bates, Executive Director, Cradle to Career Data System

From: Stewart Knox, Secretary, Labor and Workforce Development Agency

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Summary:

Informed by recommendations from internal meetings and workgroups, this document provides the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) priorities on information that can be provided to the California Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C) to expand the P20W analytical data set. Additionally, this serves as a request to C2C to provide LWDA feedback about what is within scope for C2C to provide in order to support improved labor market information and the use of C2C data to inform workforce analyses.

Background:

During the planning process for C2C, a working group made up of representatives from state agencies recommended that the analytical data set include information necessary to better understand the outcomes of people who participate in the workforce programs. In preparation for the expansion of C2C's analytical data set, LWDA worked with C2C to understand the information already being provided by other state agencies, generate a list of priority research questions that could be answered if LWDA provided additional information, and develop a list of data points necessary to answer those questions. These items are described below and will be shared for consideration in public meetings. This document will serve as a starting point for the data LWDA is ready to share.

During early 2025, LWDA will work with C2C to develop the technical documentation necessary to provide workforce-related data points and submit the list of data points it intends to provide for the May 2025 meeting of the C2C Governing Board.

Also during the first portion of 2025, C2C will convene a task force made up of experts who have extensive experience with workforce data and research. This group will identify additional questions that could be answered with the data points prioritized by LWDA. They will also suggest additional data points that could be included, for consideration by LWDA and other agencies. Once the data points are determined, C2C will implement a user-centered design process and host community conversations

to ensure that information is presented in a manner that is useful for a broad range of interest holders.

Priority Research Questions That Could be Answered Using Linked Data

All of the items below should be disaggregated by:

- Demographics

- Geographic regions

- Industry sectors

- Workforce program

- Receipt of support services

Research questions:

- How do outcomes compare for workforce program participants that do not receive training versus those who receive training?

- How do workforce program participants' education and employment outcomes compare to similar populations who did not participate in workforce programs?

- How do workforce program participants' education and employment outcomes compare to similar populations who participated in training programs provided by other state agencies?

- How many opportunity youth are there in California? What types of education and workforce program participation is associated with disconnected young people enrolling in postsecondary education or becoming employed?

- What are the education and economic outcomes of workforce program participants who are justice involved?

- How does participation in multiple programs or systems impact education and employment outcomes for workforce program participants?

- Which educational experiences and public benefits are most often associated with strong education and employment outcomes for workforce program participants?

- How does workforce program participation relate to educational attainment and the types of institutions that people attend?

- How does workforce program participation relate to education debt?

- How does workforce program participation relate to receiving public benefits?

- How does workforce program participation relate to placement in a quality job?

- How does workforce program participation relate to job retention?

- How does workforce program participation relate to wage gains?

- How are workers who participate in workforce programs progressing along career pathways and if so, which ones?

- What is the return on investment on workforce program participation to the individual?

- What impact does workforce program participation have on economic growth?

- What impact does workforce program participation have on uptake of public benefits?

- What types of economic benefits does investment in workforce programs provide to employers?

- How well do education and workforce programs align with the skills needed by employers?

LWDA Data Points Proposed for C2C Inclusion

To help answer some of these questions, existing information would be separately provided for each of the following four data sets held by LWDA.

Note that the data sharing agreements for the Cross-Systems Analytics and Assessment for Learning and Skills Attainment (CAAL-Skills) data set, which is compiled by LWDA, do not allow information to be used for any purpose other than legislatively mandated reporting. Furthermore, most of the information included in CAAL-Skills could be provided to C2C through the LWDA upload and files that are already provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Participant Demographics

- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender/sex assigned at birth
- Disability

- Veteran status
- Sexual orientation
- Zip code
- Education level at point of enrollment

Barriers to Participation

- Household/family size
- Single parent
- Foster youth
- Homeless youth
- Justice involved
- Low income

Services

- Training/skill type
- Training start date
- Training end date
- Training provider
- Service type
- Zip code for training provider
- Occupation for training
- Industry for training

Participant Outcomes

- Training completion
- Measurable skills gain
- Workforce credential attainment
- Employer
- Occupation of employment
- Industry of employment
- Quarterly earnings

Potential Data Points That May Be Needed to Answer Research Questions

This document includes an ambitious set of research questions that, if solved, could reveal critical information around the outcomes of individuals in workforce programs. These questions can only be solved through a collaborative partnership with other state agencies sharing additional data. These priority research questions could be answered only if additional agencies and departments beyond LDWA also shared additional data points with C2C.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

- Course taking records
- Noncredit status of courses taken
- Data point for CAAL-Skills that are not already being provided to C2C, including:
    - SAM code for courses taken
    - Middle name
    - Address
    - Ethnicity
    - Sexual orientation
    - Transgender
    - Ex-offender
    - Exhausting TANF within two years
    - Long-term unemployed
    - Displaced homemaker
    - Cultural barriers
    - Dislocated worker
    - Migrant/seasonal farm worker
    - Single parent
    - Type of service received
    - Service status
    - Occupation associated with service
    - Service start date
    - Service end date

California Department of Education

- All K-12 adult school records currently being provided for CAAL-Skills

California Volunteers

- Participation in service learning

Department of Corrections

- Involved with the justice system
- Charge status
- Incarcerated
- In facility educational/credential attainment
- Incarceration release date
- In facility educational/credential attainment
- Incarceration release date
- Incarceration release location

- Mandatory post-release rehab
- Recidivism status
- Recidivism rate
- Language

Employment Development Department

Note: this would require that additional information be collected from employers and, if necessary, state law be amended to allow for data sharing

- Hours worked
- Location of employment
- Occupation

Franchise Tax Board

- Earnings
- Zip code

Health & Human Services Agency

- Participation in workforce training programs

US Census

- Earnings

Improving Labor Market Information to Inform Workforce Analyses

LWDA recommends a statewide function that provides labor market information to all agencies and education systems and helps to establish common definitions across agencies. Through this function, the state could collect information necessary to analyze demand, evaluate job quality, document career pathways, and provide analyses of which types of education and workforce training programs prepare people for specific jobs. Information that is held by C2C could be used to inform these analyses, and the C2C Office could explore which of the following would be within the scope of C2C's work or would be a better fit for a different entity.

Specific steps that could be taken to improve labor market information include:

Strengthen Underlying Data

- Explore expansion of the state wage file to include factors like hours worked, occupation, and location of employment.

- Explore expansion of LMI through the Unemployment Insurance wage file with information from the Franchise Tax Board to better understand the outcomes of people who are self-employed and explore data matching with other state entities to enhance record match for more comprehensive analyses.

- Conduct regular, targeted, sector-specific surveys of employers that complement administrative data sets to create stronger employer feedback loops, as well as more accurate and timely information, particularly for emerging or changing occupations.

- Expand the use of student follow up surveys to capture information that is not available from administrative data sets, including the data on lived experiences from C2C's Annual Student Experience Report.

- Expand existing worker surveys to better understand working conditions, such as the amount of debt at the point of securing their first job, previous work, number of jobs worked, and job quality.

- Expand the information that agencies collect on state licenses and align the information collected.

Conduct Additional Analyses

- Conduct analyses that show the empirical relationship among learners, education and training, and employment outcomes -- rather than emphasizing crosswalks between academic disciplines and occupations -- to clarify likely career ladders and embedded skills. This is particularly important for college majors that are not specifically vocational, to expand information on people in low-wage occupations who may not be represented in analyses based on tools like LinkedIn, and to identify the impact of bias on factors such as earnings. It could also inform how occupations are mapped to industry sectors. These analyses could be enabled via education, higher education, workforce, and earnings data linked via the Cradle-to-Career System.

- Create sector-based analyses that show supply and demand in a way that emphasizes job clusters over regional boundaries.

Strengthen How Data is Presented

- When presenting information, describe issues that impact job opportunities, such as local and regional conditions, economic cycles, and seasonal factors.

- Include skills when describing occupations.

- Help to translate technical information into common and consistent language, such as providing common job titles to clarify terms used in occupational codes.

Coordinate Data Use

- Connect data across agencies to fill in missing information. For example, whenever possible, document learner characteristics and outcomes through data matches rather than self-reported information, such as through C2C.

- Align definitions for geographic regions across all education and workforce entities.

- Create consistent definitions for industry sectors, including which occupations to include in each sector.

- Establish common definitions for key metrics across all state agencies, such as how to calculate earnings.

- Develop shared skills taxonomies that clarify terms commonly used in job descriptions, and map skills to shared sector and sub-sector lists.

- Prioritize providing information back to employers on a regular basis to validate research, gather up-to-date information, and to better support the state's economic development goals.

- Sustain regional forums where educators, workforce training providers, community organizations, and employers meet to discuss labor market information and its implications in the context of key initiatives.

- Create regional working groups for labor market information data providers to regularly compare findings and develop consistent information and framing.

- Coordinate existing regional forums where educators, workforce training providers, community organizations, and employers meet to discuss broader trends in the labor market to determine how to meet local demand.

- Create sector-based forums where educators, workforce training providers, community organizations, and employers work together to address shifts within industries with the support of labor market information and can share relevant information back to regional forums.

- Consolidate tools based on an individual's life stage and circumstances (for example, K-12 students, college students, opportunity youth, dislocated workers, mid-career workers) and create interfaces that share the same underlying

information (for example, education and workforce training opportunities and job information) but are tailored to the needs of different types of learners and workers. These interfaces should show both immediate work opportunities and longer-term career ladders.

- Facilitate discussions across agencies about how labor market information is being used and to identify ways to make the information more useful.