Beyond Degrees

Lessons Learned from Skills2Compete-Maryland

How one state went beyond traditional data and policy approaches to build a more integrated, training-focused, labor-market driven and accountable workforce and education system.

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# Beyond Degrees

## Lessons Learned from Skills2Compete-Maryland

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Skills2Compete-Maryland will ensure that every working Marylander has access to the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school—leading to a career or technical credential, industry certification, or two years of college—to be pursued at whatever point and pace makes sense for individual workers and industries.

—Governor Martin O’Malley,
Skills2Compete-Maryland Vision Statement, March 2, 2010

Introduction

With this vision statement as his call to action, on March 2, 2010, Governor Martin O’Malley announced Skills2Compete-Maryland, a campaign to ensure the state’s economic future by increasing “the skills of Maryland’s workforce by 20 percent by 2012.”

Skills2Compete-Maryland is the state’s measurable mandate for a more integrated, training-focused, data-driven, and ultimately more accountable workforce and education system. It includes an external public information campaign to encourage more residents to pursue postsecondary credentials. But just as significantly, it includes, as its means for tracking success toward the Governor’s goal, an innovative approach to counting Marylanders’ degree, credential and basic skills attainment across a broad array of public programs.

As such, Skills2Compete-Maryland encapsulates some innovative approaches that other states might consider in their efforts to raise the skills of their residents. Skills2Compete-Maryland:

- Defined a single, measurable statewide postsecondary goal for skill attainment, as publicly articulated and publicized by its Governor;
- Developed a platform for cross-agency alignment and accountability to the Governor’s goal across the full range of the state’s human capital programs;
- Counted a diversity of skills outcomes as potential markers of success—not just degree completion, but also the attainment of other industry-recognized credentials, as well as transitions of low-skilled individuals onto new career pathways; and
- Included a system of cross-agency data collection and reporting that allowed the Governor to monitor, in real-time, his Administration’s progress toward his 20 percent by 2012 goal.

This paper examines what prompted Maryland to take this extraordinary step forward with these state policy and data reforms; how government agencies worked together to begin documenting progress toward the Skills2Compete-Maryland goal; and what lessons might be learned from this initiative as other states (or even federal agencies) assess how to ensure that all human capital investments are helping a broad scope of workers and industries obtain the skills necessary to compete and prosper in today’s economy.
The Journey to Skills2Compete-Maryland

Governor O’Malley had long understood that economic prosperity for Maryland depended in part on the education and skill level of the state’s workforce. Skills figured prominently in his election and re-election platforms and fell squarely within the top four priorities he established for his Administration: skills, security, sustainability, and health.

During his first term, skills likewise featured prominently in Governor O’Malley’s budget proposals. He created Maryland’s first dedicated funding source for higher education through the Higher Education Investment Fund, increased state student financial aid by $95 million to $462 million, and increased investments in Maryland’s community colleges by 35 percent. But to ensure these investments were spent wisely, the Governor coupled greater investments in skills with a series of education, workforce and economic development policy reforms to improve alignment and performance across agencies, thereby increasing their collective impact.

One key reform early in the Governor’s tenure involved realigning the state’s adult and correctional education programs. Legislation proposed by the Governor in 2008 transferred oversight of adult education and literacy programs and correctional education from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor’s Division of Workforce Development. Under the direction of a new Workforce Creation and Adult Education Transition Council, Governor O’Malley sought to better align the basic skills being taught to adult learners with the needs of the state’s employers, while connecting basic skills education to occupational training and other workforce development services.

But the Governor knew that simply moving programs would not in and of itself produce an aligned system with more effective services for workers and industries. Ultimately these reforms needed to be formally directed toward a shared, measurable goal. In 2008, Governor O’Malley created the Governor’s Delivery Unit (GDU) to work with state agencies to begin to develop fifteen cross-agency measurable policy goals within his four priority areas—skills (later changed to opportunity), security, sustainability, and health—to better align state and federal resources and improve Maryland’s economy and quality of life (see Figure 1).

Skills2Compete-Maryland was thus driven by the Governor’s desire to measure his Administration’s progress on his “skills” priority. It was also informed by new analyses of the state’s changing job market. Throughout 2008 and 2009, the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) had been examining the tightening labor market, emerging skills shortages in key industries and occupations, and the range of credentials that Maryland employers were using in hiring decisions. The GWIB’s investigation was informed in part by the national Skills2Compete campaign’s signature report, America’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, by economists Harry Holzer and Robert Lerman. In a presentation of the report to the GWIB, Professor Holzer explained that the largest portion of jobs in the U.S. over the coming decade would continue to be middle-skill jobs, requiring a credential past high school, but not a four-year degree. The GWIB’s own state labor market analyses confirmed similar trends.
Figure 1. Skills2Compete in Context

Maryland developed fifteen cross-agency measurable policy goals within these four key areas.
Thus, on March 2, 2010, Governor O’Malley launched the Skills2Compete-Maryland initiative to strengthen the skills of Maryland’s workforce, increase business competitiveness, and grow the middle class. He called for increasing the number of Marylanders who receive job training by 20 percent by 2012, with a special emphasis on middle-skill jobs and adults with low basic skills.

Coinciding with the Governor’s announcement, National Skills Coalition released a companion report, *Maryland’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs*, which utilized much of the same analysis incorporated by Holzer and Lerman in their national labor market analysis. The Maryland report found that 47 percent of current job openings were middle-skill, but only 37 percent of Marylanders had the skills to fill them.6

With the announcement of Skills2Compete-Maryland, the state had a clearly defined, broad-based goal for skill attainment that was generally aligned with industry needs, and a Governor who was willing to stake the reputation of his Administration on the achievement of that goal. But how was state government to go about measuring progress toward the 20 percent by 2012 goal? Would it achieve new alignments across various state education and training initiatives? And would those outside of state government—including Maryland’s business community and the broader public—come to value the effort?

An assessment of Skills2Compete-Maryland’s key components provides some preliminary answers.
A Bold Numeric Goal Backed by Strong Executive Leadership

Economic recovery takes more than just attracting business and creating jobs; it also means equipping those businesses and filling those jobs with a world-class Maryland workforce. Skills2Compete-Maryland will help build that middle and high-skill workforce.

—Governor Martin O’Malley, March 2, 2010

POLICY CHALLENGE: In order to measure postsecondary skill attainment writ large, someone at the executive level—above the agencies—must set a broad numeric goal.

S2C-MD SOLUTION: As a proxy for raising the skills of the Maryland workforce more broadly, Governor O'Malley set a single numeric goal for postsecondary attainment and developed an executive leadership structure, led by the Lieutenant Governor, for achieving the goal.

Governor O’Malley’s establishment of a broad-based goal for skill attainment may have been singular among governors, but another chief executive had recently set a similar goal. In his 2009 address to a Joint Session of Congress, President Barack Obama called on every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training past high school, “whether at a community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship.” That call to action was driven by his goal to restore America’s position as a world leader in its proportion of citizens with postsecondary degrees or certificates by 2020—an effort that would require the U.S. to award an additional 13 million degrees beyond those already projected under current policies.8

But Governor O’Malley took a step beyond the Obama Administration when he began to hold all of his cabinet agencies—not just his Department of Education—accountable to his broader postsecondary goal. Indeed, leadership from the Governor’s office was critical to moving Skills2Compete-Maryland forward—not only in bringing public attention to the initiative’s 20 percent by 2012 goal, but in getting otherwise independent cabinet agencies to feel jointly invested in the effort.

The Governor’s announcement of Skills2Compete, and the coordinated release of Maryland’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, drew press attention both because the Governor himself was involved and because a diversity of stakeholders endorsed the campaign. For example, both corporate and labor leaders praised the Governor for the initiative at the Skills2Compete press conference, as well as in interviews with the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, Washington Business Journal and Baltimore Business Journal.9

Maryland’s cabinet secretaries, community college presidents, and workforce investment board directors were also present for the Governor’s announcement. Looking back after the first year of the initiative, many of those present reflected on how the visibility of

Praised by Business and Labor

“We know we are going to need more qualified applicants. We know we will double our size in three to four years, and training will be vital to our ability to do that.”

— Martin Knott
President,
Knott Mechanical
Washington Post
March 3, 2010
Skills2Compete had won them some new public attention for their often hidden efforts, with the public endorsement of the boss himself.10

Also attending the launch event was Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, whom the Governor publicly tasked with managing the cabinet-wide effort. This, too, proved essential in communicating to cabinet agencies that the Governor’s office was fully committed to this effort.

Shortly after the launch, the Lieutenant Governor met with cabinet secretaries to ensure they were ready to fully cooperate with the initiative, including providing necessary data and high-level staff to the initiative’s Interagency Workforce Committee (see Figure 2).

With staff support from the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and the GWIB, the Lieutenant Governor led a process that set individual agency benchmarks toward the larger 20 percent by 2012 goal. DLLR and the GWIB thereafter coordinated the collection of workforce training data across ten state agencies, twelve local workforce investment boards and sixteen community colleges. In addition, cabinet secretaries reported on a monthly basis to the Governor’s Office (and sometimes to the Governor or Lieutenant Governor themselves) on their agencies’ contribution toward the 20 percent by 2012 goal.

**Stakeholder Buy-In**
*Business, labor, and public officials attended the launch.*

![Images of stakeholders](image.png)

- The Honorable Martin O’Malley, Maryland Governor
- The Honorable Anthony G. Brown, Maryland Lieutenant Governor
- Dr. Charlene Dukes, President, Prince George’s Community College
- Andrew Larson, National Project Coordinator, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Job Corps Pre-Apprenticeship Program
- Bill Robertson, President and CEO, Adventist Healthcare Inc, Chair, Governor’s Workforce Investment Board
- David Stewart-Howard, President, Prince George’s Community College Student
Breaking Down Silos: Participation Across All Human Capital Agencies

I am honored that Governor O’Malley has asked me to lead this effort and look forward to working with all the participating agencies, the private sector and our neighbors, friends and family members who will develop the necessary skills to compete in our increasingly technological economy.

—Maryland Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, March 2, 2010

**POLICY CHALLENGE:** Outcomes are typically measured in isolation within agencies or funding stream silos.

**S2C-MD SOLUTION:** The Governor mandated that all agencies come to the table, ensuring the full range of human capital investments would be included in assessment of progress toward goal.

Realizing the Governor’s 20 percent by 2012 goal required the breaking down of agency silos and the alignment of disparate programs and departmental missions toward a common end. These silos started to crumble within the GWIB’s Interagency Workforce Committee, which operationalized Skills2Compete-Maryland. As a standing committee of the GWIB, the Committee consisted of senior staff (deputy and assistant secretary level) of key partner agencies involved in education, training and workforce development. For the Skills2Compete effort, the Committee was expanded to include the state’s P-20 Council, its Community Colleges and local workforce investment boards—for a total of 38 partners. Figure 2 represents the agencies that came to the table.

By having all of these departments and programs at the table, Maryland ensured that the state would be able to measure the full range of outcomes generated by the state’s human capital investments: not only the traditional degrees and diplomas that Marylanders were earning in the state’s high schools, colleges and universities, but also the broader range of credentials being earned by the state’s residents through less traditional educational pathways pursued through community-based organizations, labor-management training partnerships, and apprenticeship programs. Only by assessing how all of these programs and institutions were contributing the skill levels of all Marylanders could the O’Malley Administration assess how the state’s dollars were being spent to that end.
Figure 2. Skills2Compete-Maryland Interagency Workforce Committee
Beyond Degrees: Measuring Nontraditional Pathways and Outcomes

The Governor was joined today by … other leaders to focus attention and resources on community college certificate and degree programs, apprenticeship opportunities, private career schools and community-based training programs.

—Press Release Announcing Skills2Compete-Maryland, Office of Governor Martin O’Malley

POLICY CHALLENGE: When trying to measure postsecondary attainment, states typically default to degrees, which only measure the outcomes of investments in traditional educational pathways.

S2C-MD SOLUTION: By bringing the full range of skilled credentials and pathways under the Skills2Compete umbrella, Maryland measured outcomes of investments in non-traditional and non-degree pathways.

Skills2Compete was a compliment to, not in lieu of, other efforts by the state to track educational outcomes. On the same day that he announced Skills2Compete, the Governor also announced Maryland’s alliance with Complete College America, an effort to significantly increase the number of students who successfully complete college, closing attainment gaps for traditionally underserved populations.12 Early in his first Administration, by executive order, the Governor established a P-20 council to ensure pathways to degrees for all Maryland residents. And within his “skills” strategic initiative, the Governor set a goal to improve student achievement, and school, college and career readiness by 25 percent by 2015.

To track success toward these more traditional educational outcomes, the state began work on a comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system to track student progress from pre-school through college. For these efforts, Governor O’Malley was named the state policymaker of the year by the national Data Quality Campaign (DQC) for establishing a statewide vision and working collaboratively to develop a plan to build and use statewide longitudinal data systems that protect data privacy and security and improve outcomes for students in Maryland.13

Skills2Compete-Maryland was therefore not a substitute for these more traditional data quality efforts. Instead, it was an effort to broaden skills and credentials tracked by the state in a way that was inclusive of more of Maryland’s employers and workers, including the largest portion of workers needed in the state to fill open middle-skill jobs. The range of credentials, programs, and populations brought into Skills2Compete-Maryland tracking included:

- Community College Associates Degrees
- Community College Lower Division Credit-Bearing Certificates
Community College Continuing Education and Workforce Development (non-credit)

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Occupational Training

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Maryland Business Works (MBW) Program Incumbent Worker Training

Registered Apprenticeships

Correctional Occupational Certificates

Career Technology Education Certifications

Rehabilitation Services Workforce Training Center Graduates

Private Career Schools

Veteran’s participation in training

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants completing training

Full lists of the tracked outcomes and strategies are available in Appendices A and B.

To achieve increases in the outcomes identified across 38 programs, each agency or department had to identify a set of strategies. Negotiating these varied outcomes proved to be no easy task. The Interagency Workforce Council, working with the Governor’s Delivery Unit and StateStat (described in greater detail in the next section) sorted through a myriad of programs and outcomes to identify data and establish a process and methodology of rolling up this data toward the Governor’s 20 percent by 2012 goal.

During this process, the Committee discovered multiple gaps in data. Conflicting mandates from the state and federal policies that authorized various programs required different approaches to collecting and reporting on results. Some of the desired credentials to be measured were not actually awarded by the participating agencies, but instead were certified by private-sector entities that were therefore not part of the Skills2Compete data collection infrastructure. For example, while Skills2Compete may have measured completers of a community college information technology program, it could not readily document the number of Cisco certifications awarded to the program’s graduates after the fact by industry third parties.

Despite many challenges to locating and identifying common data, the Committee worked collaboratively to identify the most suitable and available data, fill the gaps and establish individual agency goals that went beyond diploma and degree attainment.
The Infrastructure of Accountability

Information—timely, accurate, shared by all—and the successful interpretation of that information is key to the success of any shared human endeavor.

—Governor Martin O’Malley

For years, a number of states including Maryland have been working to develop statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) that would allow policymakers to follow the progress of students through K-12 and postsecondary education programs. A smaller number of those states (also including Maryland) had endeavored to bring workforce training programs and students into those same SLDS systems. This legacy would give Maryland a head-start in developing an even more comprehensive approach to assessing all of the state’s skills and credential outcomes under Skills2Compete-Maryland.

Maryland had been one of the five original states funded by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1998 as part of its Administrative Data Research and Evaluation Alliance (ADARE). In ADARE states, university and private researchers worked with state education, labor and human service agencies to answer specific research questions by analyzing outcomes across Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Standard Reporting data, labor exchange data, unemployment insurance wage and benefit records, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) records, and Perkins/Vocational Education records with K-12 education records. In the process of trying to answer specific policy questions, ADARE states to varying degrees began to tackle the challenges that had prevented other states from integrating education and workforce data.

These challenges continue for most states to this day. A 2010 survey of states by the Data Quality Campaign found that barriers to integrated data systems include prohibitive state and federal laws, lack of resources, lack of common identifiers, lack of coordination, and incompatible systems. As a result, only four states report linking WIA Adult and Youth data to K-12 data (six report linking WIA data to postsecondary data). Ten states report linking Adult Basic Education and Literacy data to K-12 and postsecondary systems.

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the U.S. Department of Education granted over $250 million to the fifty states to improve their SLDS tracking of K-12 and traditional postsecondary outcomes for full-time students. Unfortunately, funding from U.S. Department of Labor to support further integration of workforce data into these SLDS systems was much smaller ($13 million for twelve states). The fact that Maryland was one of these Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) states further positioned it to develop the kind of cross-program data systems that would align with the cross-program mandate of Skills2Compete-Maryland.

During its first year, the O’Malley Administration also developed a data and performance measurement system for state government that would align well with these other education and workforce data initiatives. StateStat is a nationally regarded, robust performance-measurement tool that uses a data-based management approach to ensure agencies are progressing toward policy goals. StateStat was modeled after the CitiStat
program that O’Malley had developed as Mayor of Baltimore, and which had received an “Innovations in Government” Award from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

At the state level, the O’Malley Administration created a Governor’s Delivery Unit (GDU) to work with state agencies to align state and federal resources around the Governor’s fifteen strategic priorities (see page 3), and to develop measurable data and metrics that each agency would roll up into StateStat in order to chart their progress toward the Governor’s goals. As such, the StateStat infrastructure proved essential to the collection and regular reporting of cross-agency data to assess progress toward the Skills2Compete-Maryland 20 percent by 2012 goal.

Basic tenets of StateStat

- Accurate and timely intelligence, shared by all
- Rapid deployment of resources
- Effective tactics and strategies
- Relentless follow-up and assessment

The Governor’s Delivery Unit worked closely with the Skills2Compete partner agencies within the IWC to set goals toward the 20 percent by 2012 goal, establish baselines, and identify data within and across their silos. Once numeric goals were set, a rigorous monitoring process was put into place. At meetings convened by StateStat officials every month, Skills2Compete partner agencies, cabinet secretaries and program managers meet with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and/or executive staff to report and answer questions on agency performance and progress toward the Skills2Compete goals. Regular briefings are conducted based on key performance indicators from the customized data templates submitted to the StateStat office by the GWIB and other participating agencies. Data is analyzed, performance trends are monitored, and strategies to achieve improved performance are developed. In an effort to ensure public accountability, graphs showing progress toward the Governor’s fifteen policy priorities are made available to the public on the StateStat/GDU website (see Figure 3).
Figure 3. Public Accountability

The StateStat/Governor’s Delivery Unit website documents progress toward each of the Governor’s fifteen cross-agency policy priorities, including Skills2Compete. Graphs below represent data as presented on the website as of August 2011. View the full Skills2Compete interface and the most recent graphs at www.gov.state.md.us/statestat/GDUskills.asp. Once on the website, click on individual pie pieces to see corresponding line graphs.
StateStat not only measures agencies’ progress on a series of policy goals and objectives; it also helps agencies address departmental or interdepartmental problems in achieving these goals. StateStat officials act as a problem solver at times, assisting agencies in meeting their policy goal by securing additional resources if warranted, removing bureaucratic barriers, or influencing cross-agency collaboration.17

In an assessment of Skills2Compete-Maryland’s first year by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, it was noted that the state’s continued efforts to fully develop a statewide longitudinal data system will greatly assist in collection of this data in the future.18 In January 2010, Governor O’Malley introduced legislation to integrate the state’s multiple educational and workforce data systems in a seamless longitudinal data system.19

To support its state longitudinal data system efforts, Maryland was awarded Race to the Top funds from the U.S. Department of Education and Workforce Data Quality Initiative funds through the U.S. Department of Labor. With four years of work toward building an SLDS, Governor-led legislation to integrate workforce and education data, and federal resources from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, Maryland is well-positioned to realize a fully integrated system and to demonstrate how these resources can be brought together to track progress toward key policy goals like Skills2Compete.20
A Preliminary Assessment of Skills2Compete-Maryland

The primary measure of progress toward the Governor’s 2012 goal is the number of enrollments and completions in the individual agency plans. Thus, Maryland had to establish a baseline for the number of people enrolled in various types of postsecondary education and training across its agencies, as well as those who were in basic skills programs with the intention of eventually transitioning into postsecondary classes.

In many ways, the establishment of this baseline number in one place across all participating agencies was one of the more challenging and significant initial accomplishments of the Skills2Compete effort. Using 2009 as a baseline to begin the measurement, Maryland was able to count a total of 257,315 individuals engaged in some sort of postsecondary education or training across the participating agencies. To meet the Governor’s goal of a 20 percent increase by 2012, this would mean state government would have to enroll an additional 50,000 Marylanders in postsecondary education and training programs within the next three years—a total of 308,778 individuals trained by 2012.

Figure 4. Enrollments and Completions in Maryland’s Workforce Development System

Sample input and outputs of the Skills2Compete-Maryland Plan.21
With baselines established, and a system in place to track agency contributions toward a general outcome, the real work begins. There is a great amount still to be done by the state not only to improve and better align the various public education, training and postsecondary programs that are expected to contribute to this effort, but also to further refine the data tracking and sharing systems that are being used to measure the progress. But even at this early stage of its development, there are a number of key lessons learned from Skills2Compete-Maryland that will help the state tackle these challenges. A number of these lessons were uncovered in interviews with the members of the IWC undertaken by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce.

- **Measuring Progress Toward a Tangible Goal Forces Problem Solving**

  Operationalizing Skills2Compete revealed gaps in data, uneven practices among agencies, and a lack of coordination between programs. The discovery process undertaken through Skills2Compete clearly identified these systemic deficiencies and is providing a “powerful lever for systems to work together to find solutions to persistent questions about which credentials are right (and how that is validated), questions about uptake of credentials and how to increase it,” and choices Maryland faces to track attainment across a range of agencies and local organizations.¹²

- **Changed Perceptions are a Key Step in Systems, Policy, and Program Alignment**

  In interviews with Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, all participants agreed that Skills2Compete-Maryland is “providing an opportunity for systems to align missions, policies and programs in a way that has not occurred in previous state initiatives.”²³

- **Counting Credentials is a Powerful First Step in Defining Credentials with Value**

  Some argue that simply setting a goal to count credentials and outcomes across programs is not an inherently valuable exercise—that it must be preceded by an effort to define credentials of value, an effort that can become highly contentious and divisive. But Skills2Compete has shown that the process of simply counting outcomes across programs can in and of itself become a consensus building process. Corporation for a Skilled Workforce’s interviews with all participating agencies found that after grappling with the challenges of operationalizing Skills2Compete, they were all united in the belief that credentials—whether from workforce or academic programs—must hold real currency in the labor market. As such, participating agencies all indicated a shared desire to track labor market outcomes across relevant systems and programs.²⁴

Collectively setting a broad state policy goal and having individual agencies implement strategies was a successful step toward meeting the goal. More importantly, Skills2Compete allowed leaders to view workforce training programs as a system regardless of what agency they sat under, provided them with valuable information about training and credentials, and moved all partners toward working together to improve the outcomes of the system. Using a strategy to pursue federal grant funds,
increase interagency cooperation, and increase outreach to the community, Maryland hopes to meet its goal by the end of 2012.

While the process of operationalizing Skills2Compete has not solved all challenges of coordinating the state’s workforce development and education efforts, it has provided an opportunity to align missions, policies and programs in a way that could bring lasting collective systems change.

**Conclusion: Driving Accountability and Innovation in Tough Economic Times**

While Skills2Compete-Maryland is still a work in progress, it has proved to be a policy initiative that is dismantling some of the barriers that have prevented Governors from holding the state's human capital investments accountable to the demands of the labor market and from realigning their systems to better serve this end. This type of initiative is relevant in any fiscal climate, but it is particularly relevant today when resources are tight and all investments must be evaluated. Skills2Compete-Maryland is a valuable policy model for increasing accountability. But it is also a valuable model for driving innovation, particularly in the current fiscal climate.

Over the last decade, other states have made significant investments in innovative policy initiatives that better serve the needs of the diverse workforce and align education and training programs with the needs of local industries so that more people can gain skills that lead directly to employment. These innovations are certainly of interest to many states—amidst high unemployment, nearly every state is struggling with ways to engage more people in the labor market. But in the current fiscal environment, states interested in replicating these innovations have little if any flexibility to fund new programs. With looming deficits and constitutional mandates to balance budgets, new resources for innovation are hard to come by.

Despite these fiscal constraints, states do have the flexibility to better allocate existing education and training resources to achieve better outcomes for workers and industries. But states must first be able to measure what their current investments are buying before they can hold those investments accountable to the demands of the labor market. That requires the collection and alignment of outcome data across the full range of agencies that administer human capital investments. Once these outcomes are measured, it becomes possible to make the case for realigning a state’s investments to support innovation and better performance.

This is not to say that the data infrastructure needed to comprehensively evaluate labor market outcomes across multiple agencies is without significant costs. State and federal lawmakers need to be prepared to invest in the infrastructure necessary to do this kind of analysis and alignment. But Skills2Compete-Maryland demonstrates that there is a crucial—and relatively cost-neutral—policy step that can be taken to ensure that the state is fully mobilized to take advantage of those data infrastructure investments. When a Governor sets a measurable goal, demands cross-agency participation in measuring progress toward that goal, and insists on attention to a set of educational pathways and skill outcomes that go beyond diplomas and degrees, that chief executive has taken a crucial step toward ensuring a state's human capital investments actually lead to economic growth and broader prosperity.
# Appendix A: Examples of Agency Outcomes Measured Toward Skills2Compete Goal


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<th>Agency*</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Program/Department</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Baseline Data (July 1, 2009)</th>
<th>Agency 2012 Goal(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Associate Degrees Awarded</td>
<td>AY2008-2009 10,371</td>
<td>12,445</td>
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<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Lower Division Certificates Awarded</td>
<td>AY2008-2009 2,550</td>
<td>3,060</td>
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<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Credit-Based Enrollments</td>
<td>AY2008-2009 128,093</td>
<td>153,712</td>
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<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Continuing Education Workforce Related Course Enrollments</td>
<td>FY 2009 213,921</td>
<td>256,705</td>
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<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Continuing Education Enrollments that Lead to a Govt. or Industry Required Certificate or License</td>
<td>TBD (FY 2008 94,664)</td>
<td>113,597</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHEC</td>
<td>Postsecondary Institutions</td>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>Number of Private Career School Enrollments and Completion Rate</td>
<td>FY 2009 29,125 / 70%</td>
<td>34,950 / 70%</td>
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<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Local Workforce Investment Board</td>
<td>Number of participants active in skills development training programs</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>3,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Local Workforce Investment Board</td>
<td>Number of veterans active in skills development training programs</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Local Workforce Investment Board</td>
<td>Number of disabled persons active in skills development training programs</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Maryland Business Works</td>
<td>Number of incumbent workers receiving MBW funded training</td>
<td>2461</td>
<td>3105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Maryland Business Works</td>
<td>Number of employers receiving MBW funded training</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Maryland Business Works</td>
<td>Number of employer projects receiving MBW training</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Labor and Industry</td>
<td>Apprenticeship and Training</td>
<td>Number of Graduates of Apprenticeship Programs</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>1,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Labor and Industry</td>
<td>Apprenticeship and Training</td>
<td>Number of Registered Apprentices</td>
<td>(CY 2009) 9,487</td>
<td>10,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Labor and Industry</td>
<td>Apprenticeship and Training</td>
<td>Number of New Apprenticeship Programs Registered</td>
<td>(CY 2009) 9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR</td>
<td>Labor and Industry</td>
<td>Apprenticeship and Training</td>
<td>Number of New Apprenticeship Programs Registered in Non-Construction Occupations</td>
<td>(CY 2009) 2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR, DPSCS</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Correctional Education</td>
<td>Number of occupational certificates awarded to inmates</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLLR, DPSCS</td>
<td>Workforce Development and Adult Learning</td>
<td>Correctional Education</td>
<td>Number of inmates who completed employment readiness and workforce development classes</td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td>3,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency*</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Program/Department</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Baseline Data (July 1, 2009)</td>
<td>Agency 2012 Goal(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE</td>
<td>Career and College Readiness</td>
<td>Maryland Career and Technology Education</td>
<td>Percent of CTE graduates who had access to an industry certification, licensing exam, or early college credit who passed the assessment or earned industry recognition. (Technical Skill Attainment)</td>
<td>~47.5% of CTE graduates (3,484 out of 7,337)</td>
<td>Increase by 10% (from 47.5% to 52.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR</td>
<td>Economic Assistance</td>
<td>Reaching Independence &amp; Stability through Employment (MD RISE)</td>
<td>Number of training partnerships developed.</td>
<td>No MD RISE partnerships existed in July 2009</td>
<td>Establish 10 training partnerships by June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR</td>
<td>Economic Assistance</td>
<td>MD RISE</td>
<td>Number of customers enrolled in occupational skills training.</td>
<td>640 customers</td>
<td>Customers enrolled in occupational skills training: 768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR</td>
<td>Economic Assistance</td>
<td>MD RISE</td>
<td>Number of customers who complete training and receive an industry-recognized certificate.</td>
<td>190 customers</td>
<td>Increase number of customers who complete training: 228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE, DOD, MHEC</td>
<td>MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</td>
<td>Workforce and Technology Center (WTC) Career and Technology Program</td>
<td>Number of WTC Career Technology Program Graduates</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE, DOD, MHEC</td>
<td>MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of DORS clients sponsored in postsecondary and career technology programs</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>3,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE, DOD, MHEC</td>
<td>MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of DORS clients that achieve an employment outcome in a middle or high skill job.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDE, DOD, MHEC</td>
<td>MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of persons with significant disabilities who obtain a degree/certificate/certification after completing a postsecondary education or career technology program.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>270 additional public or utility company/contractor participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHCD, MEA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Training Participants in the State Weatherization Training Program</td>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Agency Key:

MHEC = Maryland Higher Education Commission  
DLLR = Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation  
DPSCS = Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
MSDE = Maryland State Department of Education  
DHR = Department of Human Resources  
DOD = Department of Disabilities  
DHCD = Department of Housing and Community Development  
MEA = Maryland Energy Administration
Appendix B: Sample of Agency Strategies Toward Governor’s 2012 Goal


**Strategy 1: Community Colleges, Maryland Higher Education Commission**
Increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Maryland’s sixteen community colleges and increase enrollment in workforce-related non-credit courses including enrollment in continuing education that leads to a government or industry required certificate or license. Each community college has created a S2C strategic plan customized to their institution. MHEC will track aggregate progress including enrollments and completion rates of private career schools.

**Strategy 2: Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB’s)**
Increase overall enrollment in occupational skills training by 20 percent by 2012, by increasing outreach, leveraging additional funds and utilizing the Green Job Training Grant. Additionally, increase veteran enrollment in occupational skills training by 20 percent between 2010-2012. Use available programs funded by DOL/VETS such as the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), Helmets to Hardhats, Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) and WIA funds to increase the enrollment of veterans in occupational training and apprenticeships. Emphasis will be placed on training in skills to match opportunities in green jobs and in transitioning military skills training to civilian jobs. The Governor’s Council on Veteran Skills and Employment will provide guidance and strategic planning to meet these goals. Each LWIB has created a Skills2Compete strategic plan customized to their institution which is attached as a separate document.

**Strategy 3: DLLR**
Expand the Maryland Business Works Program (MBW) incumbent worker training initiative to advance the skills of over 3,000 incumbent workers annually in Maryland by 2012. The initiative is designed to be responsive to business needs and is targeted at businesses that are investing and growing in Maryland. The initiative aids in career advancement, generates additional job opportunities, and improves worker retention by increasing the skill level of the existing workforce.

**Strategy 4: DLLR**
The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program will increase the number of Registered Apprentices and Graduates of Apprenticeship Programs by 2012 and will also increase Registered Apprenticeship Programs by registering at least fifteen new programs by 2012, including at least five new non-construction programs. Targeted areas for recruitment in non-traditional occupations include Healthcare, Information Technology, Higher Education, and Environmental Industries. Recruitment will aim to build upon existing training programs and to register existing programs as apprenticeships in order to offer employers in these industries access to experienced and highly trained apprenticeship graduates.
Strategy 5: DLLR, DPSCS
Expand participation of inmates in apprenticeships and nationally recognized certificate programs. The following section has been developed in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). The Correctional Education division of the DLLR Division of Workforce Development and Adult Education facilitates the educational aspect of the mission of DPSCS.

Strategy 6: DLLR
Increase the number of adult education participants that enter postsecondary education or training. The Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services (AELS) recently drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Services Grant, strengthening the eligibility and program requirements to better align with Maryland’s workforce and support the goals of the Skills2Compete initiative. Specifically, the AELS has emphasized a connection between grant recipients, the workforce system, and Maryland’s continuing education system. Each grant proposal is required to detail a plan to interact with the region’s LWIB and highlight existing and planned collaborative relationships to continue to develop and strengthen the career pathways of adult learners. Additionally, grant recipients were encouraged to work with the community college network to promote academic transitions, to provide opportunities for adult learners to continue their education beyond a high school diploma. These alterations will strengthen Marylander’s ability to gain the skills and credentials necessary to obtain good jobs with family supporting wages.

Strategy 7: MSDE
Increase the number of Maryland Career and Technology Education (CTE) graduates attaining industry certification, licensure and/or early college credit in the technical program area. CTE Programs of Study provide high school students with a sequence of courses leading to preparation for college and careers as indicated by completion of entrance requirements for the University System of Maryland (USM) and the completion of the CTE program of study. These students are designated as “Dual Completers” upon graduation from high school. CTE graduates meet career readiness and industry standards as indicated by technical skill attainment in the related career-field. Technical skill attainment of CTE graduates is measured through student access (identification/establishment of student appropriate industry assessments for CTE programs of study) and attainment of industry certification, licensure and early college credit in the technical program area.

Strategy 8: DHR
Increase the number of Maryland’s Reaching Independence and Stability through Employment (MD RISE) customers who complete occupational skills training and receive an industry-recognized certificate. Under the auspices of MD RISE, the Department’s training and employment agenda to improve employment outcomes for our customers, DHR is developing training partnerships in targeted sectors identified by the GWIB. Additionally, local departments of social services will increase the number of occupational skills training procured from contractors.

Strategy 9: MSDE DORS, MDOD, MHEC
Increase the number of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education and career technology training programs and the number of persons with significant disabilities obtaining a degree/certificate/certification after completing a postsecondary education or career technology program.
Strategy 10: DHCD, MEA
DHCD and MEA will continue to partner on the development and expansion of the Maryland Weatherization training program conducted through the state’s community colleges, via the Construction and Energy Technologies Education Consortium (CETEC), by encouraging or requiring utility company contractors to participate in Energy Analyst and Advanced Envelope training. DHCD will continue to work with DHR and DLLR to expand the number of DHR RISE participants who receive training through the State Weatherization programs and are then hired by one of the Local Weatherization Agencies (LWA’s) or their subcontractors.

Strategy 11: All Agencies
Increase outreach and promotion of S2C to Maryland workers. Increase collaboration with and outreach to the private sector, advocacy groups local workforce agencies, and postsecondary institutions.
Appendix C: Efforts in Other States

There are a limited number of systemic efforts around the country to collect and interpret data on the wide range of postsecondary education and workforce training programs offered in the states. Following are just a few examples.

**Washington State**

Washington State had long been a model in its efforts to collect and interpret data across education and workforce training, including the K-12 system, public higher education institutions, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Social and Health Services. Analysts have used this system to answer key policy questions that have led to nationally recognized best practices in workforce and adult education.

Resources on Washington State’s system:


**Florida**

In the 1980s Florida built a data system to answer the question: Do Florida students get remunerative jobs that contribute both to the state's economy and to their own well-being? The data system covers student exiters from all parts of Florida's public education system, high school through graduate school. Agencies include Workforce Innovation, Children and Families, Business and Professional Regulation, and Corrections. Specific programs include public assistance programs, prison programs, short term training, private training, and others.

Resources on Florida’s system:


Maine

State agencies currently included in Maine’s state longitudinal data system efforts include Education (Pre-K through 12, Child Development Services, Four-Year-Old Programs, Adult Education, Career and Technical Education); Health and Human Services (Early Childhood Programs, Educare/Head Start Pilots, Office of Substance Abuse); Corrections (Youth Development Centers); University of Maine System (Seven four-year universities); Maine Community College System (Seven two-year colleges); and Labor (Workforce Development/Maine Jobs Council, Jobs for Maine’s Graduates). Maine passed landmark legislation in 2009 that alleviated some of the specific barriers that prevented the integration of workforce and education data.

Resources on Maine’s system:


Texas

In 2003, through SB 281, the Texas legislature created the Texas Workforce Investment Council and the Texas Workforce Evaluation System operated by the Texas Workforce Commission. The legislation required the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to review outcomes by education and workforce program graduates, completers and exiters at one, three and five years after exit. This work required the linking of postsecondary and workforce data. In 2007, HB 1 established three Education Research Centers to help link K-12, postsecondary, and some workforce data.

Resources on Texas’ system:

- **Central Texas Student Futures Project**, PowerPoint presentation by Christopher T. King, Ray Marshall Center, University of Texas at Austin for a Data Quality Campaign webinar (June 8, 2010). Available at: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/SFP_DQC_Briefing_June2010.pdf.


Endnotes


2 The Higher Education Investment Fund was established by the Tax Reform Act of 2007 which dedicates a portion of the increase in corporate tax revenues to the Fund (Chapter 3, Acts of 2007 Special Session; Code Education Article, sec. 15-106.6). The fund is used to supplement General Fund appropriations to four-year public colleges and universities, for capital projects at these institutions, and for workforce development initiatives. During the 2008 legislative session, allowable uses of the Fund expanded to address higher education needs related to the state’s Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.


4 Roberta Garber and David Alstadt provide an overview of agency alignment and coordination models in a number of states. Roberta Garber and David Alstadt, Aligning Workforce Development and Economic Development: Opportunities for Ohio, Community Research Partners (Columbus, OH, 2007), p. 5. Available at http://communityresearchpartners.org/img/pdf/3300.pdf.


10 Lindsey Woolsey, Moving Beyond the Count – Maryland’s Skills2Compete Initiative, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce for the State of Maryland, Sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and National Skills Coalition (Baltimore, MD, 2011). Available at http://www.skilledwork.org/sites/default/files/Moving_Beyond_the_Count.pdf. At the end of Skills2Compete-Maryland’s first year, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce interviewed 23 sub-cabinet level officials involved in the effort.

11 Graphic reprinted with permission from the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board.


Woolsey, 2011.

The Governor established the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center Governing Board to act as an independent unit of State government responsible for the logistical, phase in and organizational plans for the LDS Center. The Board is also responsible for the policies and oversight related to privacy laws.

Maryland’s labor supply Skills2Compete initiative is complemented by the GWIB’s Center for Industry Initiatives, the state’s lead organization in providing labor market analysis and sector strategies. The GWIB’s Center for Industry Initiatives assesses the issues and demands of Maryland’s targeted industry sectors. Through the Center, leaders from private industry, government, education, and other stakeholders engage in a collaborative process which identifies critical industry workforce challenges and develops recommendations and actionable strategies to address those challenges.

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Woolsey, 2011.

Woolsey, 2011.

Woolsey, 2011.
About National Skills Coalition

National Skills Coalition is a non-partisan, broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper. We engage in organizing, advocacy, and communications to advance state and federal policies that support these goals—policies that are based on the on-the-ground expertise of our members.

National Skills Coalition was founded in 1998 as The Workforce Alliance in response to a series of federal policies that signaled the end of national investments in the skills of America’s workers at a time when skill gaps were growing in key U.S. industries. Since then, we’ve demonstrated that investments in skills work. We’ve shown that diverse stakeholders can find agreement around specific reforms that will improve a variety of workforce education and training policies. And we have documented that the American public is strongly supportive of a deeper investment in the skills of America’s workers. We continue to mobilize support for a new national skills agenda that cuts across public policies, and simultaneously serves a wide range of U.S. workers and industries.

National Skills Coalition is governed by a Board of Directors and advised by a national Leadership Council drawn from the ranks of business, labor, community colleges, community-based organizations, and the public workforce system.

More than 5,400 members, representing more than 1,400 organizations in over 30 states, comprise the broad-based membership of National Skills Coalition.

Learn more at www.nationalskillscoalition.org.