



# **Rhode Island State Report**

## **Rhode Island's SWEAP Effort**

When Rhode Island applied to the National Skills Coalition for SWEAP funds we had two main goals. The first was to create a workforce development performance dashboard where policy leaders could look to gain insight on what the workforce efforts are in Rhode Island, who are we serving and how well we are doing it. The second goal was to create a yearly labor supply and demand tool that focused on our graduates in higher education. This tool would inform policy leaders in their efforts when developing a new performance funding formula for higher education in the state and provide youth in our state a better picture of the supply/demand dynamic for their potential majors.

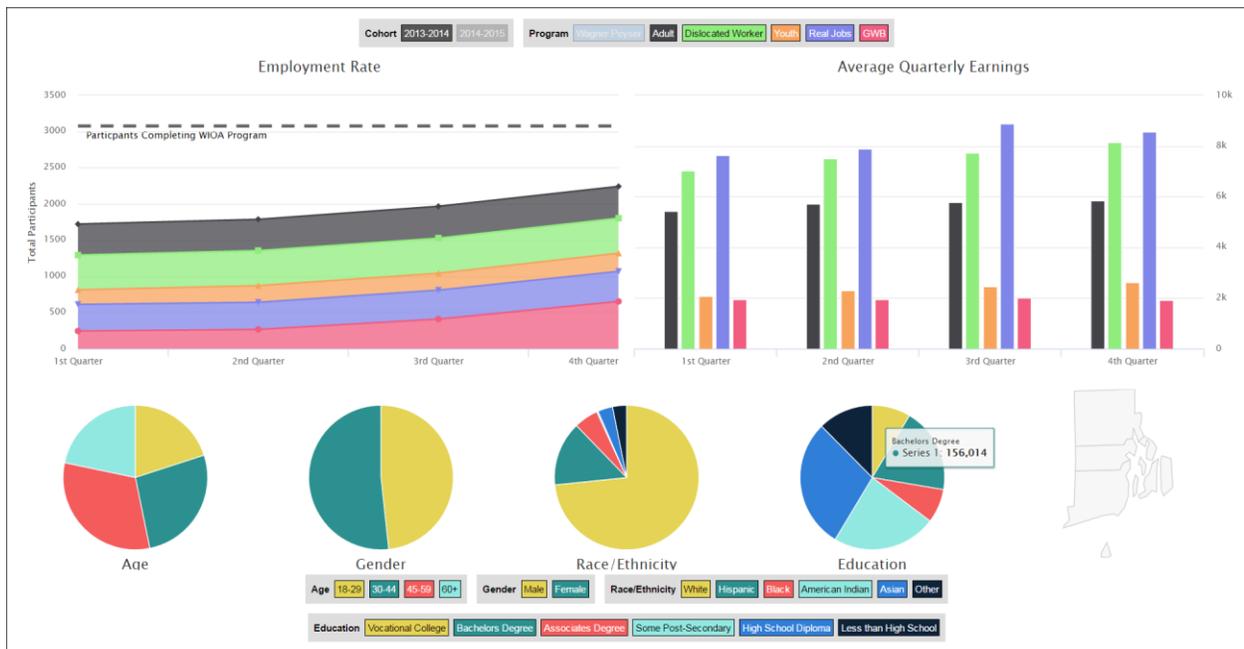
## **Rhode Island's SWEAP Team**

Our team is led by Scott Jensen, the Director of the Department of Labor and Training. Director Jensen was responsible for overseeing and ensuring internal and interagency participation and performance in meeting the data requirements necessary to develop the dashboard. Data sharing agreements and the accompanying programming requirements are complex and staff have a number of competing interests. Nevertheless, as a Cabinet level position overseeing one of the Governor's key priorities, Director Jensen helped ensure the efforts necessary to build the workforce performance dashboard continued to be met. Key members of the Governor's Workforce Board were also on the SWEAP team. The Governor's Workforce Board is empowered by statute to serve as the main policymaking body for workforce development in the state of Rhode Island. Heather Hudson, the Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Board helped set the direction and vision for what the final workforce development dashboard should be. Heather conferred with colleagues in K-12 education, higher education, and other workforce partners on the breadth and depth of the planned end product and also worked with Robert Kalaskowski on project management. Robert, the Chief of Policy and Planning for the Governor's Workforce Board was responsible for working with the selected vendor on developing and executing the scope of work for the workforce dashboard as well as determining the 'look and feel' of the end product. As internal lead for the workforce dashboard effort he help organize efforts to develop a shared vision for the dashboard effort, develop timelines for initial deliverables, and help facilitate/troubleshoot data sharing challenges. Rounding out the last of the state employees is Joseph Agresti, a Principal Research Analyst in the Labor Market Information Division. Joe was responsible for the creation of the Labor Supply & Demand tool. Working with NSC partners and members of the Office Postsecondary Commissioner of RI, Joe coordinated the effort to create a RI specific SIP to SOC crosswalk that was the foundation for the labor supply & demand work that was done for this award. Joe was also responsible for coordinating the effort to get the workforce data for the dashboard from Geographic Solutions to our research partner DataSpark. Finally none of this great work would be seen without David Grenier, the DevOps Director at our vendor - DataSpark. David was the vendor lead responsible for developing the workforce dashboard. In that role, David build the digital infrastructure necessary to intake multiple varying data sets, clean them, and present them visually. David led DataSpark's data team on developing the core

website; then selected and informed the work of a third party web developer to enhance the visuals of the webpage to make it more user-friendly and visually appealing.

## Rhode Island's Data Tools Workforce Dashboard

Like most states, Rhode Island has a range of state and federally workforce development efforts that go beyond WIOA funded programs. The end goal is to capture the performance of all of these programs in a single, user-friendly, web-based performance dashboard. To date, the vendor has developed the framework for an initial web based dashboard and has successfully linked to a WIOA performance data set. The state has reviewed the design and informed/improved the specific elements that will be included. Other programs will be added incrementally. Once the state's sector-driven state and federally funded effort is added, the vendor will work with a web designer to improve the 'look and feel'; then the initial version of the dashboard will be released (target date: July 2017). From that point on, the intent is for the dashboard to grow, with each new addition likely requiring further backend infrastructure work to effectively 'plug in'. Below is a snapshot of what the current dashboard looks like.



We intend to crosswalk this performance information with data from sister agencies such as Education, Human Services, Corrections, and even the Division of Motor Vehicles. Doing so will allow us to learn much more about our clients, and their long-term outcomes, as well as ask some impactful questions: How do graduates from specific CTE program do in the job market over others? What social determinants impact Adult Ed program success? How more likely is an individual to obtain or retain a job if their training included a work experience? Cabinet-level officials were involved in setting the direction of the web-based dashboard as well as helping ensure participation from internal staff on meeting the data needs of the vendor. The legislature is very engaged in the policy of workforce development and has already empowered our State

Workforce Development Board with the power and authority to align the breadth of workforce development and career-related education programs to the needs of employers and develop tools to share performance information with the public. Legislative staff were apprised of the vision for the initiative and Governor's staff helped make interagency connections. When completed, the information and advanced queries that the performance dashboard will provide will help redeploy resources to high performing programs, and better identify populations we may be underserving. The state can also develop carrot/stick policies to encourage workforce/education programs to align better with the largest/growing sectors of our economy, in cooperation with our Sector partnerships. Lastly, with advanced analytics we can develop policies aimed at addressing barriers found most likely to influence participant success.

#### **Supply / Demand Tool**

Rhode Island's first quarterly labor supply and demand tool was published for the first quarter of 2012. This work provided a springboard for a new report made possible with SWEAP resources. Initially our state focused on improving our existing labor supply and demand report in terms of data collection, verification methods and appearance. After this was completed we created a supply and demand report for new workers that compares graduates in the most recent year available from IPEDS to the occupational projections published by the State's Labor Market Information Division. A custom 4 digit CIP to 6 digit SOC crosswalk developed jointly by the LMI division along with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner was used to create the report. This tool will be published yearly by the LMI office and will be distributed statewide and directly to all public high schools as a tool to guide students and their parents in their decision making regarding higher education. In addition the LMI office will work with the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner's Office to communicate any major shifts in the labor supply & demand dynamic to policy makers. We cannot stress enough the importance of getting buy in from higher education at the very beginning of the process. Luckily this project started with a request from higher education, but if a State is looking to create a supply/demand tool it would be wise to have leaders in higher education involved in the creation of the CIP to SOC crosswalk. It is currently in the final review process but we are sharing a snapshot below for your review.

<b>Selected in Demand Fields of Study</b>	<b>Supply*</b>	<b>Demand**</b>	<b>Gap</b>
Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing & Nursing Assistants	65	443	378
Precision Metal Working	5	240	235
Computer & Information Sciences, General	94	319	225
Human Development, Family Studies, & Related Services	152	335	183
Computer Engineering Technologies/Technicians	21	199	178
Computer/Information Technology Administration & Management	21	192	171
Mental & Social Health Services & Allied Professions	22	170	148
Computer Science	136	276	140
Computer Engineering.	23	161	138
Information Science/Studies	13	143	130
Computer Programming	82	204	122
Health & Medical Administrative Services	185	307	122
<b>Fields of Study with a Possible Student Surplus</b>	<b>Supply*</b>	<b>Demand**</b>	<b>Student Surplus</b>
Culinary Arts & Related Services	1,310	561	749

Policy leaders engaged in the creation of this tool were; Dr. Jim Purcell Commissioner of Higher Education, Dr. Phyllis Harnick Assistant Commissioner of Higher Education and the Assistant Director of DLT/Leader of State LMI office Donna Murray. Dr. Phyllis Harnick worked with Joe Agresti in the LMI office over a period of several months creating and modifying the RI specific CIP to SOC crosswalk in addition to preparing a white paper explaining the methods and results of the tool and analysis done. Donna Murray and Kathleen Greenwell from the Labor Market Information unit oversaw and provided guidance for the tool throughout the term of the grant and was present at meetings with the Commissioner’s office. Finally Commissioner Purcell was the primary policy maker interested in the tool as it would end up providing the work that helped to inform the new higher education performance funding formula, (S 2392/ H 7428) that was signed into law in August 2016. One of the 3 priorities identified in the law for public institutions of higher education is increasing graduates in high-demand, high-wage fields. This work helped to inform which 4 digit CIP codes should be used in the metrics for gauging institution performance. Baselines for each school were developed and must meet a 5-Year target or not receive additional funding.

### **Looking Back & Ahead**

A key lesson learned from the workforce performance dashboard project was the importance of identifying and working through the technical ‘backend’ data integration items first before getting into the hopes and wishes for what content and visuals should be on the webpage. We hoped that the latter would dictate the former, but quickly learned it was the other way around – at least initially. Regrettably, we got off to a slow start. We lost some mission critical staff not long after we secured the SWEAP grant, and once we were at capacity; we had issues with potential vendors. In addition, the development and sharing of data sets was a challenge given differing language and sometimes unresponsive partners. The Department quickly moved responsibility from the project to appropriate internal staff and was able to transition the effort to a talented vendor who the state had already engaged in a data analysis effort. Since the beginning of this effort, our vendor DataSpark has converted from an independent entity to an

arm of the state's main public research university. This new positioning and relationship not only opens the door to great research and data analysis efforts, but provides a permanent public 'home' for the backend infrastructure of the website. Once the site is developed, ongoing maintenance, upkeep, and evolution will likely be borne by the Governor's Workforce Board in meeting its responsibilities for collecting, condensing and sharing performance information regarding the public workforce system. The Board, and other public partners, will be able to submit queries and data 'pull' requests to DataSpark to help answer policy questions and inform policy and resource decisions going forward. In the past 18 months Rhode Island has made tremendous progress towards a more data driven and transparent approach to workforce development in large thanks to the funds and assistance provided by the National Skills Coalition. We look forward to further developing our tools and building on SWEAP efforts.