Digital Promise
Accelerating Innovation in Education

Tapping Data for
Frontline Talent Development:
Executive Summary

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Why It Matters

Who are the frontline workers?

Frontline workers are the workers who deal directly with customers and deliver services.

40% work in retail, healthcare, food service, and hospitality

Majority make less than $30K per year

60-70% have job-limiting foundational skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy, problem-solving)

Upskilling Opportunities Advance Frontline Workers' Prospects for the Future

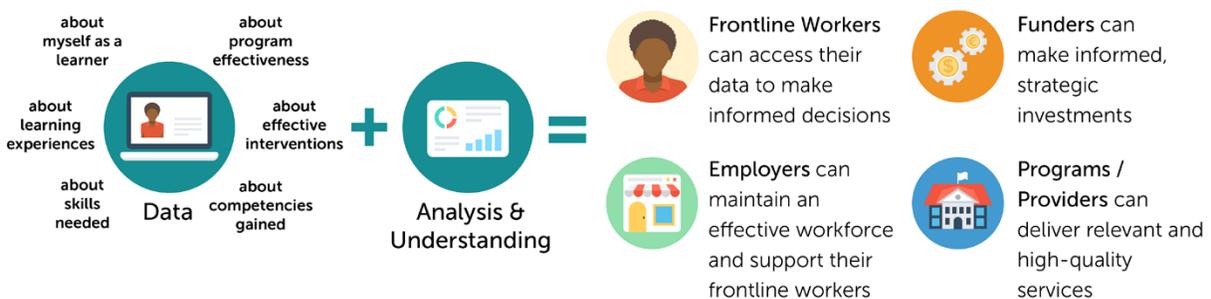While some workers do pursue educational advancement opportunities, completion and relevance are lacking.

1 in 3 say logistical barriers keep them from pursuing or completing education

50% drop out of their adult education class within 12 hours of starting

51% say that the education they've had in the last year was only somewhat useful or not useful

Frontline workers may not be getting the education and training they need to advance in their careers and sustain gainful employment. They likely do not have access to data regarding their own skills and learning and do not know what skills employers seek in quality workers. Access to this information would help inform frontline workers' decisions around professional and career aspirations.

How Data Can Help the Frontline Worker

about myself as a learner

about program effectiveness

about learning experiences

about effective interventions

about skills needed

Data

about competencies gained

+

Analysis & Understanding

=

Frontline Workers can access their data to make informed decisions

Funders can make informed, strategic investments

Employers can maintain an effective workforce and support their frontline workers

Programs / Providers can deliver relevant and high-quality services

Access to the right data will equip frontline workers with the agency and knowledge to make informed decisions about their future and will equip stakeholders[1] with information needed to deliver high-quality services.

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1 In this interactive report, researchers consider stakeholders to encompass organizations that impact or interact with frontline workers, including: employers, nonprofit and government organizations intended to provide educational and job training support as well as other services, and organizations and government agencies that fund this work.

The Current Ecosystem

The current learning ecosystem that serves frontline workers is complex, siloed, and removes agency from the worker. Although many data types are collected, much of it is duplicative and data are rarely used to inform impact and long-term outcomes. The processes and systems in the ecosystem do not support the flow of data between stakeholders or frontline workers.
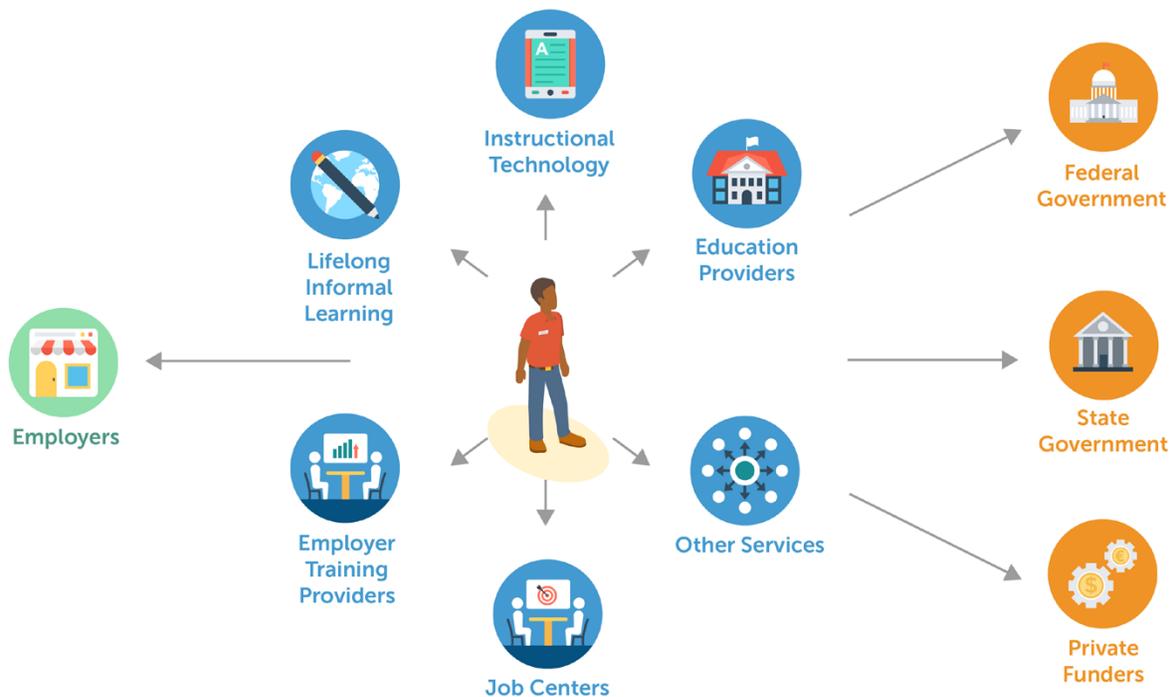
Insights

Data collection and data entry is a very manual process	A plethora of data exists, but with insufficient analysis and understanding	Data are rarely shared between providers. Data rarely flows back to providers from state or federal government agencies	Data are not shared back with the frontline workers

Overall, technology products, workforce development systems, and policies and practices that define, collect, store, and report data do not make data sharing easy.

The Challenges

The Legal and Regulatory Challenge

Privacy and security regulations can be a barrier to sharing data due to a general lack of understanding among stakeholders.

Insights

Regulations themselves do not always prevent data sharing

Stakeholders, especially providers, worry about violating data privacy regulations; they don't want to get in trouble

Creating policies and procedures for sharing data across stakeholders is key

The Incentive Challenge

The policies and practices surrounding funding and data governance discourage collaboration and data sharing, rather than incentivize it.
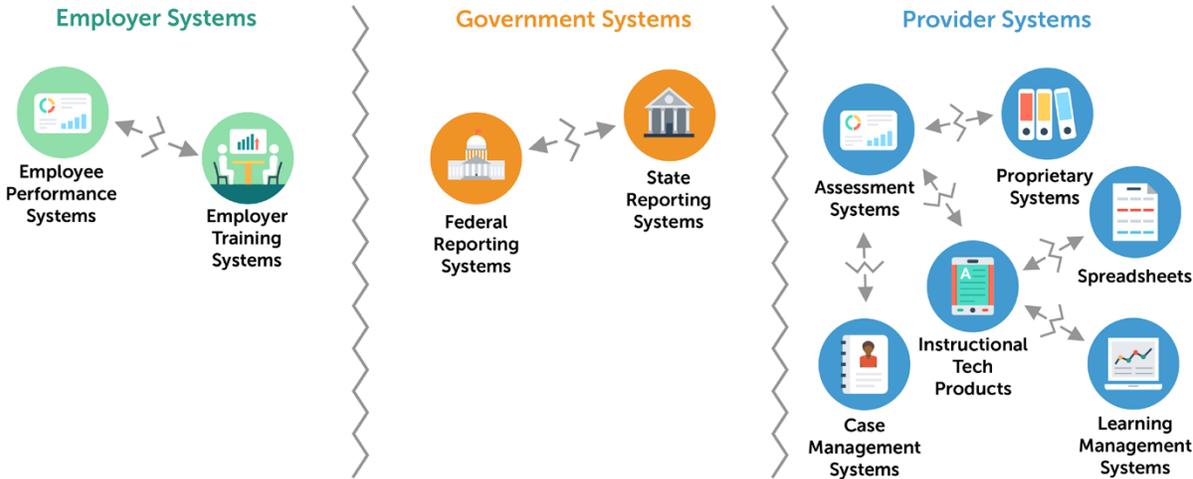
Insights

Current funding models generally keep stakeholders siloed

Practices and policies around data governance vary greatly across states and stakeholders

No obvious incentives for employers to share data outside of their organizations

The Technical Challenge

The technology products and systems used by stakeholders to collect and report data do not "talk" to each other, making the seamless transition and sharing of data between those systems difficult.

Employer Systems

Employee Performance Systems

Employer Training Systems

Government Systems

Federal Reporting Systems

State Reporting Systems

Provider Systems

Assessment Systems

Proprietary Systems

Spreadsheets

Instructional Tech Products

Case Management Systems

Learning Management Systems

Insights

Data exists in various formats

No standard data definitions exist across systems and stakeholders

Funding for building and maintaining robust systems is inconsistent and short-term

The Benefits

Stakeholders know that there is power in data-driven decision making and there are benefits to sharing data. Data sharing will help:

To improve programs and services

Create more personalized interventions

Improve talent pipelines

Getting from Here to There

Here: Disconnected Learning Ecosystem

Silos across organizations, and technology systems

Plethora of data, insufficient analysis and understanding.

Data not in the hands of the worker/learner

Lack of understanding around policy and security regulations

Lack of common language and technical standards around data

Inconsistent funding

There: Worker-Centered Ecosystem

Workers/Learners can access their data to inform their decisions

Program/Providers can deliver more effective, personalized services

Employers can improve their talent pipeline

More understanding around policy and security regulations

Funders/Government can make informed investment decisions

Case Studies

Communities

Read how the **South Lake Tahoe, CA** community is sharing data to empower their frontline workers.

States

Check out the cross-sector, data-driven process **Rhode Island** developed to achieve its statewide workforce development goal.

Employers

Learn from the strategies deployed by **healthcare industry employers** to improve their talent pipeline.

Next Steps

To move toward a more data-driven, collaborative, worker-centered learning ecosystem we have six key recommendations:

1. Create awareness and demand among stakeholders

2. Ensure equity and inclusion for workers/learners through access and awareness

3. Create data sharing resources

4. Advocate for data standards

5. Advocate for policies and incentives

6. Spur the creation of technology systems that enable data sharing/interoperability

Learn more about using and sharing data to improve the ecosystem that serves frontline workers **in the full report at digitalpromise.org**.