

WORKFORCE FUNDERS TASK FORCE

POLICY AGENDA TO REDUCE ADULT EMPLOYMENT DISPARITIES AND PREPARE MINNESOTANS FOR GOOD JOBS BY 2020

Who is the Workforce Funders Task Force?

The Workforce Funder Policy Task Force is comprised of members of Minnesota's philanthropic community with a particular interest and focus on building a workforce to sustain and grow Minnesota's economy. We devote significant private funding and human capital to address the growing gap between employer needs and worker skills. Because we come without a vested interest in any existing program or organization, we believe we are uniquely suited to provide nonpartisan policy recommendations for improving the systems and infrastructure currently in place in Minnesota.

The Need

Minnesota faces a current and growing skills gap that could threaten our economic competitiveness:

- Today's Adults Are Critical to Minnesota's Labor Market: 2/3 of the state's workforce through 2030 is working today.
- Not Enough Adults with the Skills Needed by Employers: Most jobs in today's labor market and in the future require education and training beyond high school.
 - By 2018, 70% of Minnesota careers will require education beyond high school. Currently 60% of working-age adults in Minnesota lack a postsecondary degree or credential.
 - Of the 3.1 million working age Minnesotans, 29% have only a high school diploma or less and 31% have some postsecondary experience but no degree.
- Challenges Faced by Many of Today's Adults: For many, access to college means starting with remedial education. And by the time an individual is deemed "college ready," time and money have run out (nationally, less than 4% of low-skilled adults complete college.)

The Solution

Minnesota needs more skilled workers in high-demand fields to grow our economy and close the skills gap. The Workforce Funders Task Force proposes two overarching policy goals to meet that need: (1) ensure that both public and private investments are closing skill gaps through uniform metrics and tracking systems; and (2) better align existing funding streams to support known, effective adult programs.

Three Strategies will Make a Difference:

1. **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Develop state measures for education credentials and program accountability
 - Establish a credential attainment goal for education and training programs
 - Develop an annual state "report card" for education and training programs, showing progress of all levels of the state's training and education system
 - Expand and sustain the state's ROI Initiative to require analysis of outcome data across the full spectrum of the state's training and education system for use by policymakers and students alike.
2. **Funding Alignment:** target and maximize public and private funding should be targeted at successful programs and systems
 - Build out adult career pathway system in the state to increase return on investments
 - Implement sector/cluster strategies to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers
3. **Continuous, Outcomes-Driven Improvement**
 - Use the Efficiency and Effectiveness metrics established in Part 1 to guide decision-making for funding, policy decisions and training

Where do we start? In 2013, the State should take the first two steps toward this vision:

- **Establish a credential attainment goal for education and training programs and develop an annual state "report card" for education and training programs, showing progress of all levels of the state's training and education system.**
- **Build out adult career pathway system to serve the entire the state and increase return on investments.**



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