February 12, 2021

Happy New Year! And 身体健康 (shēntǐ jiànkāng) which my native-tongued niece assures me translates as "enjoy good health"—a greeting suited to the times and to the symbol of work and progress that is the Ox.

Speaking of Progress
We just spoke with Round 6 WDQI states who are all completing their key deliverables. Next month we'll be sharing samples of their remarkable work—some of it planned and some COVID-inspired. We hope it provokes collaborative work sessions in every state in preparation for the coming WDQI Round 8 grant application process. No release date yet, but you'll be the first to know. The importance of these data systems in guiding COVID recovery efforts goes without saying (almost).

Goings-On in Workforce & Data

Happenings

- Data for Public Good Symposium, Feb 25-26, 2021, hosted by University of Michigan's Institute for Data Science. Register here.
- Data for Evidence-Based Policy Collaboration Workshop, Mar 2-5, 2021: Cosponsored by the Coleridge Initiative, the Ohio State University, and NASWA, the event will host state, federal, and philanthropic data leaders sharing strategies for advancing solutions to the COVID19 jobs crisis and beyond. Register here.
- Data for Policy, Sept 14-16, 2021, hosted by University College London (remote conferencing has its benefits!). Register here.

Hirings

- Mercy Corps' Responsible Data Program is looking for a Data Protection Specialist. (I can vouch for Mercy Corps personally since they also call Portland (OR) home.) More here.
Heartland Alliance is recruiting a Senior Project Manager of Data Strategy based in Chicago (IL). More [here](#).

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) seeks a Senior Policy Analyst (with key data responsibilities) based in Washington, DC. More [here](#).

The Michigan WDQI team seeks to recruit an Associate Director of Research and Analytics to the team. Surely you know someone amazing who could apply—share [this link](#)!

Well wishes & Congrats!

- Our own Brighthive Co-Founder, Beeck Center Fellow, and subject matter expert Natalie Evans Harris has been appointed as Senior Advisor to US Department of Commerce Secretary and former Governor of Rhode Island, Gina Raimando—a key advocate of the data innovations Amelia Roberts and her team have shared with the WDQI community.
- Caitlin Grey, SPR colleague and fellow data geek who has so ably supported the work of the WDQI community and our team, has accepted a new position with a Bay Area nonprofit organization in which she will be building data, research, and evaluation capacity from scratch! We will miss her! And we know we’re all on the same data teams even when we shift positions. 😥

#ICYMI

- A new Researchers Exploring Avenues for Data Sharing discussion group intended to support collaboration between researchers and state data system owners launches later this month. If you’d like to join, email the CEDS team “Please include me.”
- University of Washington’s Data Science for Social Good Summer Program is accepting Proposals through Feb 22, 2021. More [here](#).
- Miss the National Skills Coalitions Skills Summit? Us too. But they have a fancy new website, new reports, and the best summaries of pending legislation around. Make sure you’re signed up for the newsletter so we can meet at the next Skills Summit!
- The Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration’s own #COVID19 response resources and FAQs is available and continually updated just for you.

Last But Not Least

You need this. Wait until this afternoon, get yourself some tea, and blopera. You can even send your creation to your valentine. (You are welcome 😊 .)

We’ve got a short and wide-ranging collection this month. Enjoy. And take care of each other out there.

❤️十大
Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff), Editor
Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver) & the SPR/BrightHive Support Team

One Thing
A Framework for Organizing Workforce Response & Recovery
A follow-up to *Creating an Agenda for Workforce Recovery* (Fall 2020), the Roadmap aims to help states accomplish four critical objectives necessary for a stronger and more equitable post-pandemic future: expand access to essential support services; rapidly connect jobseekers to work; advance digital access and skill development; and enhance job quality for all. Data is one of eight elements comprising the foundation for action.

nga.org

Two More Things

Workforce Training Plays a Critical Role in Labor Market Recovery
Researchers examine the impacts of the pandemic recession across different dimensions, including employment, labor force participation, and the need for workers to pivot to new industries.

brookings.edu

How Finding a Job Will Be Different in 2021
2021 may bring some normalcy back to the workplace, but some changes are going to stick. Here’s what you need to know (and track?) to help workers and firms thrive.

fastcompany.com

Resources for the New Now
The Pandemic is Replacing People with Tech — Threatening the Jobs Rebound
You knew the automation narrative would return: 43% percent of businesses anticipate reducing the size of their workforce by integrating new technology.

COVID-19 has Made Reskilling Workers More Urgent
Randstad’s VP of global learning and development says rapid pandemic-driven workplace changes are leaving many behind, and offers four ways to reskill and upskill employees.

How is the Middle Class Really Doing?
Use this interactive to find out for yourself. Access data across five domains: money, time, relationships, health, and respect. #DataViz

Have a Look: ND & Estonia(!)
North Dakota’s Integrated Data System: NDInsights

North Dakota! We saw the Sankey chart and were smitten. See what you fancy. We'll work on recruiting the ND team into the community in the coming weeks.

[NDInsights.nd.gov](https://insights.nd.gov)

Building an Integrated Data System: Lessons from Estonia

As one of the most digitized nations in the world, Estonia’s education data system provides a model that others can learn from. Have a look.

[ncee.org](https://ncee.org)

How to Design for Long Life Learning (Podcast w/ Michelle Weise)

As we end 2020, a lot of people are out of work. And even those who aren’t, are looking at unprecedented uncertainty. It’s likely that COVID-19 will accelerate preexisting future-of-work trends. Michelle Weise has ideas for how education and workforce systems could respond. Data is at the center.

[Edsurge.com](https://edsurge.com)

Have a Think
Humanity is Stuck in Short-term thinking. Here’s How We Escape.

As stewards of longitudinal data systems, we thought you’d like this think-piece.

[technologyreview.com]

Entry-Level Work as a Stepping Stone, Not an End Point

How can young workers parlay their first job into better-paying jobs? Data says...

[burning-glass.com]

Up to 30 Million in U.S. Have the Skills to Earn 70% More, Researchers Say

The findings point to the potential of upward mobility for people without a college degree.

[nytimes.com]

For Moms & Those Who Love Them

The Primal Scream Line

212-556-3800
The Primal Scream Line

Are you a parent on the edge? Call the number to scream after the beep. Then proceed.

nytimes.com

Marshall Plan for Moms

Other countries have social safety nets. America has moms (and women). Another 275,000 of them left the labor force in January.

nytimes.com

Working Moms Are Struggling. Here’s What Would Help.

What government, employers and the rest of us can do.

nytimes.com

The #MBW Podcast

Our Very Own #WDQi

#MakingBetterWork Podcast Now

Has 20 Episodes!

If you haven't subscribed, pull out your mobile device and do it now!

iTunes * Stitcher * GooglePlay

Search for Making Better Work on Google Play (a quirk of the platform).

Again, we hope these communication channels will bring your work further into the public domain so that kindred spirits in different parts of the public data ecosystem can find each other. It's a big job but somebody's got to do it. Why not us?
This is the 23rd edition of #MakingBetterWork, the perpetual beta newsletter of the longitudinal workforce data community.

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite get there). Here’s our focus (always subject to change) going forward:

- **COVID-19** (until future notice)
- **Impact** (Products, legislation, key policy decisions, and more – what difference is WDQI making in your state, community?)
- **Governance** (In the words of one of our subject matter experts, "It's everything.")
- **Ecosystem** (How do we better align public data efforts and work with nonprofit, foundation, university, and other partners more effectively to address critical workforce and education issues? How do we do this consistently, ethically, and responsibly?)
- **Themes that run through WDQI events and activities**:
  - Federal legislative mandates (WIOA – and evaluation, HEA, Perkins, etc.)
  - Trends in training: non-degree credentials, work-based learning, apprenticeship, technology and distance learning, dual-systems, stackable credentials, etc.)
  - Future of Work – using data to help policymakers, institutional leaders, and the rest of us navigate it
  - #DataViz – so more people can understand, interact with, and use the data and tools we're all creating.

In case you’ve received this from a friend or colleague and don’t know how to find us, we’ve provided our contact information below.

**Kristin Wolff** (Editor-in-Chief): Kristin_Wolff@spra.com

**Maureen Sarver** (Chief WDQI TA Architect): Maureen_Sarver@spra.com

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the US Department of Labor or other public agencies (state, federal, or local) participating in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative. Mentions of trade names, commercial products or organizations does not imply endorsement of same by the US Government or representatives. Click for information about WDQI.

**Know someone who needs this newsletter? Forward it or send them here.**