**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

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**Visualizing Data to Improve Workforce Development Collaboration**

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OPERATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to "Visualizing Data to Improve Workforce Development Collaboration" hosted by WorkforceGPS. I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. Brian Keating. Sir, please begin.

BRIAN KEATING: All right. Thanks so much, Benita. Well, thanks for joining us, everybody on the end of today's webinar – or today's first – well, this is the first workshop in a weeklong virtual institute. So I imagine many of you were with us earlier for the opening plenary. So thanks for rejoining us.

And what we're going to do now is jump right into an opening presentation after which point we will be moving to a breakout session. So right now your phone line is muted. We will be moving to an open session where you will not be muted and we'll encourage you to collaborate, we want to encourage you to, for now, find your mute button so that you can mute yourself if you think there might be background noise where you are, to go ahead and participate in that 25-minute breakout session.

But first, like Benita said, welcome, everyone to today's Visualizing Data to Improve Workforce Development Collaboration workshop. To kick things off, I'm going to turn it right over to Jeremy Kelley from Jobs for the Future to set some context for today. Jeremy, back to you.

JEREMY KELLEY: Thanks a lot, Brian. I just wanted to introduce our presenter, Colby Spencer Cesaro from the Workforce Intelligence Network in Southeast Michigan. You know, we're – she's going to talk through some ways to use data, both to visualize it, but also to present it to external stakeholders such as employers and community colleges to increase workforce development collaboration from a sector development perspective. So with that, Colby, take it away.

COLBY SPENCER CESARO: Thank you, Jeremy. Hi, everyone. Good afternoon from Southeast Michigan. My name is Colby Spencer Cesaro and I'm the senior research director at WIN, the Workforce Intelligence Network.

WIN – Workforce Intelligence Network – has three primary pillars: data, employer engagement and policy, and part of all of that is outreach and communication.

So how do we better utilize data to create a more comprehensive and cohesive workforce development system, how do we engage employers in that process to be part of the solution and how do we work on policy, both internally with WIBs and community colleges and other talent stakeholders as well as at the state and national level.

So these are the three primary things that WIN does. Within data, we have lots of different data reports and we do work specifically in Southeast Michigan and we also have some other national partners that we do work for, which you'll hear about in a little bit throughout the presentation.

We have several employer strategies groups, which also are known as cluster strategies, depending on what part of workforce you're engaged in, but we work primarily with healthcare IT, manufacturing and retail and hospitality employers in our region. And on the policy side, we look a lot, actually, at data sharing agreements, which is our new big thing in Michigan. So with that, a few of our things, we always joke and say we do stuff, because we do a lot of things.

So we do a lot of stuff and this is a little snapshot of some things you'll find on the WIN website, including a report on middle-skills jobs that are trending in the Detroit region. This is a report from last year. We're going to be doing an update of that this year, probably this summer. And the Atlas Center report, this is a partnership with the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.

And also on the screen, you'll see the Eureka report, this is a large-scale survey, we had about 230 responses of employers in Michigan talking about the next Eureka technologies of tomorrow and what the workforce needs to do to prepare.

So we have a pretty broad range of work that we do. You'll also see LIFT on there, it's one of the National Networks for Manufacturing Institutes, NNMIs. We do a lot of work with that group, LIFT as well as some of the other NNMIs. So if anyone has questions about some of those projects, please don't hesitate to ask. So examples from WIN, we work with community colleges, workforce development, we work with economic development; and of course, other partners.

I mentioned LIFT and again, IACMI the composites institute, another of the NNMIs. Example data requests, so a lot of our work is not actually published in these shiny, fancy reports like you saw on the we do stuff slide. A lot of our data work is done, because people call us or email us and say I want this data conundrum, can you please help me? And frequently it's from our board organization.

So WIN's board is made up of 10 community colleges and six workforce investment boards across a 16-county region in Southeast Michigan. So we're in quite a large area and sometimes we get class questions about what jobs are trending in the region, what should students go into and where should we invest workforce dollars? Sometimes you have a WIB that's got leftover money and they say we've got to spend this in the next six months, what's the most impactful investment we can make using this?

We also get requests on what jobs are falling behind. Are there occupations that we should not be encouraging people to go into, because they really are dying? And how do we make sure employers have what they need? And this is on the business services side of the WIB. There's a lot of business services activity in workforce development and so many employers don't know that that exists.

And so how do the WIBs show their value to those employers? New programs to create, this comes from the community college side and also from the WIB side and again, what majors should I tell my students to take on? This aligns really well with what jobs are trending in the region. So how do we guide job seekers and students in the right direction?

So these are really big questions. As you know, these are the questions that drive our day to day work, but sometimes they are really detailed and specific. So we're going to go through a couple of these. A few things that we always follow when we do data. When we fulfill data requests and do reports, if you look at any of our reports, they're always multiple sources of information.

So the number one data rule to live by is not to use just one source of data. We love EMSI, we know lots of you use EMSI. We also use Burning Glass, we also use CareerBuilder's supply/demand portal. We also use JobEQ, which is really similar to EMSI, but has some nuances that are a little different.

So you will get a much more complete picture if you understand the nuances and the numbers and look at different sources, because everybody's estimations are different and we also use publically available data. We use QWI for local employment dynamics, other BLS data, lots of things. So also, dig in for information, have your reality check. Not all data is created equal and if something looks funny, it probably isn't right.

And sometimes this could be a typo in a document. I had a recent issue last week when we were presenting a WIOA regional plan to a board and someone caught a typo in a data table that showed there were 43,000 people on public assistance in one county and that's probably the population of this county. So that was clearly wrong and that was a good reality check moment, that that's probably not right. So you always want to look at the data.

Some of it could be a human error like it was in our report or it could be something else going on. One instance we had with Burning Glass was it showed there were only four job postings in a certain county in Michigan for welders when an employer, just the week before, had posted 60 open positions and then we learned that the issue was that there weren't 60 job postings, but it was 1 posting with 60 available positions and the Burning Glass data hadn't captured that.

So you always want to dig in. If something seems off, it probably is. And then finally, always double check with your local employers and talent system for extra details. Employers will give you additional information about their needs to better flush out your data and provide insight. Schools do the same on program offering enrollment.

An example for the employer side is in healthcare, nursing, the demand for nurses. We always ask our healthcare partner and say what's going on in the nursing field? We see just off-the-charts demand. What do you really need? And we often hear that there's more demand for nurses with specialties, but so many hospitals will just post for a standard RN with a bachelor's degree just to get people to interview and get them in the door and then try and figure out if they already have a specialty or could them some additional training to be in a specialty.

And so little nuances like that are really helpful, but you don't get them unless you ask employers. And also on the employer's side, and we'll walk through this a little bit more in the next few slides – on the employer's side, the data is a wonderful way of engaging companies in the conversation, because you come to them on their level.

If you look at job posting data, and employment trends, and wage trends, and go to a company and say hey, this is what we're seeing in the data, what do you experience? They can say oh my gosh, that's exactly right, how did you know? Or they may say no, that's actually not what we are experience at all, I wonder why the data shows that. And then now all of a sudden you've got a great conversation going and you can engage those companies, because you comment them and say we have some information, is this useful to you, is it not? And then all of a sudden you've got a relationship going.

So the data rules to live by can help you, one, have better quality information and two, helps insure that you can come with a complete picture as you engage employers in workforce development activity. So keep also in mind that it's not always a black and white answer, always talk about the data limitations.

If someone, a company or a partner is asking you for data, ask what the purpose of the data is, what geography are they interested in, do they have a particular time period? Sometimes if your data is going to be public, you don't want to share a spreadsheet, you want to share maybe a simple graphic that's a lot easier for the public to consume.

So think of the graphics you see on the cover of USA Today, that's a really good example of what's digestible for the typical consumer or even for an executive, they're not going to read a spreadsheet, they want to see one graphic and two or three bullet points and that's it.

But if your data is for a researcher or someone who's pretty data savvy, you might be able to send a spreadsheet and that is what they want. So you always want to dig in and figure out why do they need this data and that really will help you better identify how to go about aggregating the right information and presenting it.

So some examples from WIN, let's talk about community colleges first. So here you've got Mott Community College and Washtenaw Community College, which is the Ann Arbor area and St. Clair Community College, which is up just north of Detroit. Now, these community colleges come to us and did come to us recently for grants and they also come to us for program development asking about data.

Now, on the community college side, the state of Michigan had a grant available for community colleges for heavy machinery and equipment for training and the rules were you had to show that there was job demand, that there was a required heavy machinery. So the machinery had to cost more than $5,000 if it was for training and you had – so you had to show the job demand, you projected the growth, you had to show direct employer need and then you also had to identify if this is an area of competitiveness for you.

And so we helped these three community colleges as well as several others in our area identify what jobs were going to be growing in the area and then we had to cross-reference that with jobs that someone could get with a two-year degree or a certificate from a community college, because there might be some jobs where you need a bachelor's degree and that's great, but that's not where the community colleges are going to really be able to have an impact. So we wanted two-year degree or certificate, we needed to cross-reference that also with employer demand.

So we looked at job postings for these occupations and then we also looked at the location quotient; what made those jobs competitive in the area versus others? And so there really was a sweet spot for each of these community colleges to identify what types of machinery they would need or materials they were need that were going to be expensive, they needed the grant to pay for them and our community colleges were awarded 39 percent of all of the state funds available for new equipment.

So they got $19.4 million in equipment grants and all of it was because of good quality data and of course, the fantastic grant writers at the community colleges. So it was a great team effort and it's things like this that really show the value of high quality data analytics and information for community college partners. On the program development side, we produced these. These are little occupational profiles, this one's on cyber security and a lot of these questions are focused on what community colleges want to identify before they start a program.

So some of the questions are what occupations are growing, are there occupations that require a two-year degree or is a two-year degree or certificate something that could be a jumping off point into a career or even into a four-year degree? So where can community college add value? And then who should the school recruit identifying where there might be gaps in demographics? Is there a lot of women in occupation?

And they actually want to diversify and add more men or vice-versa. Are there too few minorities in an occupation? So you want to identify not just what job, but who and then this can help community colleges figure out what types of programs to create, who to attract into those programs and then by displaying the data, and you can look on our website for these, they're occupational profiles, you identify what is the growth in jobs, what do the postings look like, what are the starting salaries, things like that that are helpful for students to say, oh, wow, starting salary is pretty high, I could start this with two years of training, great, I'm going to enroll in this program.

And again, that data and information helped in several ways. It helped identify what the community college needs to invest in and it also identified for students how they could choose a major based on better information.

So workforce development, right here we've got SEMCA, Southeast Michigan Community Alliance, which is a Michigan Works agency from Wayne and Monroe Counties and Oakland County, Michigan Works. SEMCA is WIN's fiduciary, so WIN is technically a program under SEMCA.

So a couple of these ones. Quick spending. I know everyone here that's at a WIB understands where you've got money that has to be spent, you use it or lose it and you want to find the best way to spend it in a short amount of time and you want to train people, get them into jobs.

Business services is also another important part of what workforce investment boards do and data, I know, especially wage data for employers is essential for the business services staff. So a couple examples, we had a request from a WIB on where to make a quick investment with strong impact, how do you spend down dollars, we need six months of training or less, we have to have a lower skill population demographic, you need to have a credential awarded and it needs to be employer-centered.

So we took all of these things, we looked at employer needs, we looked at job ads, we looked at growth areas in job ads as well as annual turnover and openings, we looked at the skills in demand for lower skill workers. So we took entry-level jobs, job postings, skills listed in those job postings and cross-referenced it with O\*NET categories and identified the growth in the growth jobs for entry-level workers that were typically lower skill where a credential that could be earned in six months or less was desired by employers and there are several.

I know Microsoft Office is one of those examples, but there are several others where the workforce investment board that came to us with this request was able to make some investments, train some people, get them into jobs, they fulfilled their credential requirement and they were able to spend those dollars. So it was pretty exciting.

Another one, wages, this is a really, really big one. Employers don't pay enough. So this is an Oakland County request on cashiers, retail, order clerks, customer service representatives comparing Oakland County data to the rest of Southeast Michigan. So this is a wing region that we call Southeast Michigan. And one of the biggest things that we like to – one of the greater things we like to encourage when we talk to businesses is paying a competitive wage.

If you want an average worker, you pay average wages. If you want an exceptional worker, you want to pay them or compensate them and if it can't be through pay, it needs to be through some sort of creative compensation. So employers in certain areas have a lot of turnover. Well, why is that? Well, if you're requiring people to have a pretty intense job, you don't have a lot of benefits and you still only pay $8 an hour, that might be the reason.

And so we had an employer that wasn't paying even at the 10th percentile wage that was really struggling with turnover and we were able to show the comparative data in the region and in the county so that that WIB could go to the employer and say listen, here's what we're seeing. And the employer kind of went oh, I had no idea.

And some employers will push back on that. We know, however, if you are able to present the information that shows what everybody else is doing, that might encourage that employer to raise their wages a bit, then those people might stick around in those jobs and those people also will be better paid. So it's very beneficial. So this is actually a slide from why we're doing a return on investment of apprenticeship study, but again, it's highlighting how to present really interesting data.

So right here you'll see the dark blue is the degrees and certificates awarded related to these particular occupation groups. Now, remember, these are not industry groups, these are occupation groups. So groups who own that code. And then we also add in the job postings. You can see in the State of Michigan the supply/demand gap if we're just looking at newly degreed individuals, newly certificated individuals compared to total postings, this is a pretty scary look at what's to come.

And so these sorts of things help encourage employers to get involved in your employer strategies groups. All of this data, whether you're sharing wage data, overall job posting data, showing the supply/demand gap, because they feel it, they know that they can't find the right people. But if you show them something like this and they say wow, that's everybody else too, it's not just me, that's going to encourage them to participate more in a group and more in a partnership.

This is just a fun graphic, age demographics and experience required in job postings. Experience required is a good one. You look at the skills gap, so many job postings, some want lots of experience, some don't want as much, but the skills gap graphic is a really fun one to show. It's not data, but it's cute and people always like it in a presentation. So I always highlight that on there.

And please know zero to two years is considered entry-level and that means someone with two years of experience might be entry-level still. And two years of experience, that means that we need more on the apprenticeship side, on the on-the-job training side. I know for all of you in workforce development, I'm preaching to the choir here, but companies sometimes need to hear that. Once they see that there's a skills gap and then they see they want someone with two years' experience, that's partially because they need to play a role in this.

Finally, we've got a lot of retirements coming up, you all know this, this is going to be a big issue for backfilling a lot of jobs where people are retiring. So these are areas where there may not be job growth, but once people retire, that leaves a lot of openings. So there aren't new jobs, but that annual turnover thing is a big, important point to reference, especially with your companies that see 50 percent of their workforce is going to be retiring in the next decade.

So again, an important thing to focus on. I'll leave you with the competitive wages, you'll have to fight for every nickel is pretty fun and I'm running out of time here. I really like this wage calculator, Job Search Intelligence. And for those of you who logged on, you'll probably get this in the packet. I'm assuming they're sending the slides out.

But this is a great one for calculating competitive wages. And also, remember the quick trick when you see hourly wages, multiply out the hourly wage by 2080 and that's the equivalent of a full-time salary. So 2080 hours is working 40 hours a week 52 weeks a year.

MR. KELLEY: And Colby, before we transition, I think we're going to transition into the breakout discussions and I think one of the things that was on this slide was you talked about the required minimum experience in the online jobs and you mentioned sometimes the discrepancy between what can be in a job posting and what happens when you actually present it to a group of employers. They may see something different than what's in the source of labor market information.

And I think that's actually a good transition into the type of discussion that we like to have for discussion. We're going to split up here and one of the two questions that we want to talk about are if there are specific data points that anybody in the room who's used that have been helpful in engaging employers and educators and if there are any types of data visualization that have created engagement from workforce development stakeholders, whether that is presenting something which you think is inaccurate, but you hear more feedback or you hear more substantive or constructive conversation from the group that you're presenting it to.

So we really want to hear your experiences. We want you to have a conversation about some of the things that Colby highlighted, but also share your own insights, share your own experiences in your questions and then we'll reconvene towards the bottom of the hour and go over those conversations.

MR. KEATING: All right. Thanks, Jeremy. So we are going to go ahead and move now to the actual breakout session. So couple things, these are the discussion questions we're going to be asking you to answer. You have been randomly assigned to one of the two conversations that will be happening simultaneously. When we move you there in a moment, your phone line will be unmuted.

So we want to make sure you take a moment now to locate your mute button. Please go ahead and mute yourself if you don't want to be talking right when we begin or if you think there might be background noise, just some consideration for others and make sure you mute your line when you're not speaking. You can use your phone's mute button or you can go ahead and press \*6 to mute yourself once we move you over. And then we're going to be guiding you through this conversation.

We will go ahead and come back in about 20 or 25 minutes. So stay with us at the end to go ahead and debrief and again, we'll be with you throughout the breakout. We're going to go ahead and guide you through the conversations – actually, guide you through that conversation. If you're in breakout room one, your facilitator is going to be Jeremy Kelley who you've heard from so far. He's a senior program manager with Jobs for the Future. If you're in breakout room two, you're going to be with Veronica Buckwalter, senior program manager also with Jobs for the Future.

So we're going to go ahead and move to the breakout rooms now. If you don't hear anything, you're not sure what's going on, it should be seamless, but you can press \*0 if you'd like to call the operator. So be on the lookout for that, we'll give you some instructions when we move to the breakouts and we're going to go ahead and start the breakouts now.

So Benita, if you could go ahead and start the breakouts, I'm going to move us to the breakouts and we'll talk to you in 20 to 25 minutes. Thanks, everybody.

(breakout session)

OPERATOR: And you're back in your main conference.

MR. KEATING: All right. Thanks very much. So we should all be together again. I want to encourage – thank everyone for joining us. We are ending the breakouts. So we're going to go ahead and bring it back to a debrief portion now. So thanks, everyone. I know we had a great discussion in breakout room two and hope you did for – breakout room one, I mean. I hope you did for breakout room two as well.

Jeremy, I think we're going to turn it right back over to you so that you can give us your ideas about what was covered and we've got the notes here up that you can reference to go ahead and guide that conversation. So Jeremy, I'll turn it back to you.

MR. KELLEY: So I think in our group, one thing that we heard, which is maybe relevant to everybody on the call is that you may be presenting – you know, sector partnership often has a regional focus, but you may be tasked with presenting data from individual one-stops or individual sources that may not all roll up to the regional level.

So we heard some people chime in about how presenting how data isn't necessarily rolling up to the regional level to a regional group of stakeholders can be an important point in facilitating those types of conversations. In particular, we heard from when engaging employers, retention was a really important data point, retention in certain training programs and also, it was important not just to focus on a single data point, but to understand the culture and certain political considerations, proprietary issues around some of the data which they may be concerned about was important as well.

And in addition, they also respond well to world trends, but also the employment pipeline. And I think in terms of challenges, we heard that people are looking to bring entry-level candidates to different sectors, but they may not necessarily have an understanding of what the existing skills are or what some of the entry-level requirements may be. So kind of finding ways to visualizing what some of those entry-level requirements are was helpful.

And also, we heard in general how some of these data visualization methods can help build trust with employers or with different regional workforce development stakeholders. And lastly, I think it's a common challenge that people have where there isn't really an specific type of best practice where a lot of it really does depend on the stakeholders who are in the room and the specific questions that they're looking answered, the political considerations, which may serve as the backdrop to some of the data points that we're presenting.

I think it's a challenge to kind of find these common ways to consistently present information in a way that gets common feedback and that's something that people are working through, but there are different examples that are out there for us to draw on. So I think I'll turn it over to Veronica.

VERONICA BUCKWALTER: Great. Thank you, Jeremy. We had a really great discussion in breakout room two and we talked about effective uses of labor market data. We had a great example, we talked about in terms – we got conversation started around replacement data and the challenges around replacement data and a couple of people spoke up on this and the trying to determine, particularly with the baby boomer generation what replacement data looks like out a couple of years and the impact that the Great Recession has had on trying to project replacement data.

And we had one gentleman speak about how the BLS is working on this, but unfortunately that data set probably won't be available for a couple of years at least. So how do we start a conversation around getting better data around replacements sooner, because it is such an important piece of labor market data, a compelling piece of labor market data, and it's something that we haven't really seen great projections for yet? So how do we work around that high-need area when it comes to LMI?

We also talked about getting employers more involved in this – what one speaker called the past, present and future perspective when it comes to labor market planning and building relationships around talent management, pipeline development and using your labor market data for it, such as Burning Glass to facilitate that discussion.

This person also mentioned the importance of keeping labor market data really focused and not overwhelming, especially businesses that are new to using labor market data not overwhelming them with a ton of slides and graphs and in-demand applications and really keeping your presentation to your conversation focused.

So just a couple key things that are really going to impact them that are really going to tell a compelling story and get them enthusiastic, engaged and interested in how they can more effectively use labor market data to impact their bottom line. We talked a little bit about a school for engaging your industry and other stakeholders. This individual used Qualtrics to really dig down a lot deeper into skill needs, KSAs, job demand.

So thinking about new, interactive or web-based tools to really more effectively gather the data and information that you're looking for on a broader scale and also, thinking about what would – if you had 10 minutes to pull a really compelling piece of labor market data that would get folks engaged and get the conversation rolling, what would it be? And folks in Florida say that the Burning Glass data is one piece of data that they would definitely use just because it's real-time, it's localized, it's specific to industries, geographies, timeframes.

A lot of businesses just really aren't aware that that type of technology even exists. So presenting that data to them and talk – getting discussions started about whether this is what they're seeing in their businesses, whether they're not seeing that type of demand or those skills that are listed in Burning Glass in their businesses, but also sort of flipping things around and maybe not always starting with the data and going to the employers first.

You know, there's really no cookie-cutter way of doing this and in some situations, it may be more effective to start out your discussion with industry and then go to the data instead of having employers always responding to data and verifying and validating data. You know, maybe to start on the other side and then go back to the data and see what's happening on that side of the story.

So that would be – I think that pretty much hits the high points of our discussion. So I'll turn it back over to you, Jeremy.

MR. KELLEY: No. I think that was a great summary and I think some of the common things that we heard across both conversations were really how important it is to keep visualization as simple as possible and as answering as focused or as specific a question as you can.

And I think we also both talked about how people tend to respond to supply and demand gaps from different software where it may be available. You know, that type of – people respond to that, whether they're an employer or whether they're an educator.

And then the point about Veronica was making about people asking about kind of the recession, really just understanding the perspective or the general category of questions that people are answering is another top-line piece of information to try to use.

I do want to thank everybody for their time today as we wrap up. I want to thank Colby for her insight and for her perspective walking through this topic.

And if you have any questions about the products she mentioned or her work, her information is on the screen. And I also want to say that the slides, if you ask questions about the slide, they're attached in the file box.

And we have plenty of sessions at the Sector Strategies Virtual Institute this week. So for the full calendar of events, those are also in the files location. And with that, I'd like to thank everybody for their time and I hope they have a good day.

MR. KEATING: All right. And we do want to encourage you before you log out today, to go ahead and give us some feedback. So we're going to move over there now. We'd love to know if you would recommend this virtual institute to a colleague and we do have some more workshops and a closing plenary coming up later this week. So definitely check that out.

If you've got open-ended feedback you'd like to give us, go ahead and let us know. Also, please rate the overall quality of today's event. Let us know if there's any other feedback you have. We've got another poll there at the top right. And last but not least, any additional topics you'd like to see covered in a future event as well. So go ahead and give us that feedback.

We're going to leave it there, audio-wise, but we hope to see you on future workshops this week and possibly the closing plenary as well. Hope to see you on other events and have a great rest of your week, everybody.

MS. CESARO: Thank you.

(END)