



Moving Beyond the Count: Maryland's Skills to Compete Initiative

A Case Study



June 2011

Table of Contents

Skills2Compete Aims to Strengthen Workers' Skills.....	5
Ten Recommendations for Maryland's Skills2Compete.....	6
The Story of Skills2Compete Maryland.....	8
Members of the Interagency Workforce Committee	8
Shared Values and goals of the Interagency Workforce Committee.....	9
Policy and Program Choices for S2C Maryland.....	11
S2C Completed Interview List	29

Maryland's Skills2Compete Initiative Aims to Strengthen Workers' Skills

In Maryland today, middle-skill jobs represent 42 percent of all job openings between now and 2016, but current projections for increasing middle-skill educational attainment are grim (less than a one percent increase by 2020). In response, Maryland is taking bold steps to increase the number of workers who possess a post-secondary education credential. Their goal is to increase the number of Marylanders who attain post-secondary credentials by 20 percent by 2012, and by doing so produce more skilled workers ready to take existing and growing middle-skill jobs.

Skills2Compete Maryland (S2C Maryland) is a campaign aimed at increasing post-secondary success to strengthen the skills of Maryland's workforce. The strategy requires aligning diverse public programs so that individuals are given the opportunity to complete a job-relevant vocational credential, an industry certification or academic preparation for a two- or four-year degree that will lead to a middle skill or better job. The intentions of S2C Maryland align with those of other states and local areas across the nation, and of President Obama, who recognizes the role post-secondary education plays in U.S. competitiveness.

S2C Maryland is distinct. It is led by an extensive and diverse interagency coordinating group that includes education, workforce development, economic development, and multiple human service agencies, each of which made concrete commitments to helping Maryland reach its 2012 goal. Since early 2010 the interagency group has met regularly to discuss and find solutions for the persistent barriers faced by individuals seeking to attain industry-relevant credentials and jobs in today's labor market.

Their discussions are not easy ones. They bump up against gaps in state policies, unclear methodologies for post-secondary education program development, and inconsistent practices at the service delivery level. They have come face-to-face with the realities of a crowded and confusing post-secondary credentials market. In some cases, students receive industry-approved certifications based on standardized testing; in others, students can work toward industry-approved licensure; and in many cases, individual institutions offer certificates for completion of courses or programs with or without third-party validation. Some certificates target general learning outcomes; others reflect specific occupational competencies. Across the U.S., tens of thousands of credentials exist, and yet workers still struggle to demonstrate that their skills are the

Middle-skilled jobs are those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. Nearly half of the jobs in the U.S. labor market today are middle-skill jobs. In Maryland, they make up 42 percent of all job openings, and pay on average above the state's median.

right ones for jobs in industries with the highest middle-skill job growth rates (such as manufacturing, healthcare, or information technology). Are credentials meaningful in the labor market? Are they standardized with some common measures of competence and assessment? Are they portable so that workers can move from one region, employer or educational institution to the next? Are they connected with other courses or credentials in a career pathway so workers clearly see the next level of training and advancement to a career?

These are the questions that S2C Maryland and its committed members of the Interagency Workforce Committee are tackling. This case study offers a summary of how S2C Maryland is doing this, as well as a set of recommendations for next steps based on interviews and an assessment conducted by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. In addition to recommendations, this case study summarizes the history of the S2C initiative, including its strategies and processes, offers an assessment of common themes from interviews with members of the Interagency Workforce Committee responsible for jointly implementing the initiative's goals, and provides further detail on the recommendations and actions needed to reach the S2C goal.

This case study was made possible by the generosity and support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Skills Coalition, both committed to supporting jobseekers in obtaining post-secondary education that will lead to good jobs.

Ten Recommendations for Maryland Skills2Compete

1. **Create an Innovative Instruction Community of Practice learning group** for post-secondary institutions to learn about and apply best practices related to making courses more accessible to working adults, including modularization, integrated basic and occupational skills training, and flexible scheduling.
2. **Experiment with workplace-based learning models** where post-secondary education institutions work directly with employers to create learning environments at their places of work for employees to upgrade their skills and get academic credit along the way.
3. **Profile and share broadly any processes that effectively identify the precise skills standards, tasks and competencies of critical occupations,** and the processes to transfer them into coursework and credentials so individuals graduate with real currency in the labor market.
4. **Advance the concepts of sector partnerships** to local stakeholders across workforce, education and economic development. Sector partnerships are proven to be effective vehicles to link employers' needs for skilled workers to

workers' needs for good jobs, and are powerful ways to coordinate across local programs.

5. **Use the Interagency Workforce Committee to come to a common understanding of what career pathways are and what it takes to implement them**, including understanding the natural career advancement paths within industry, the career awareness campaigns necessary for individuals to access the right education at the right time, and how education, training and support programs must fit together so individuals can advance.
6. **Take on the challenge of converting non-credit courses to for-credit credentials**. As workers seek to remain competitive either by upgrading current skills or learning new skills, they need a way to convert their non-credit learning into academic credit that might lead to a credential and/or a career pathway.
7. **Re-purpose existing resources into financial aid programs that make post-secondary education accessible** to Marylanders who cannot otherwise afford to participate and complete a credential program.
8. **Continue to aggressively track performance measures related to post-secondary education attainment across systems** so that policy and program decisions can be informed by real outcomes of individuals moving in and out of Maryland's diverse systems.
9. **Use the S2C opportunity to push toward shared definitions of outcomes**, and to answer the hard questions related to what outcomes Maryland wants its post-secondary institutions to be held accountable.
10. **Keep using the momentum created by S2C and the existing Interagency Work Group infrastructure** as a lever to find solutions for persistent attainment and job placement challenges, and as a way for systems to truly align missions, policies and programs to benefit individuals and companies.

The Story of Skills2Compete Maryland

On March 2, 2010, Governor O'Malley unveiled a new initiative called Skills2Compete Maryland, designed to significantly increase post-secondary education participation and completion rates, and to ultimately stimulate Maryland's economy and create jobs. The Governor's vision for S2C Maryland was based on the premise that every working Marylander should have access to the equivalent of at least two years of post-secondary education or training leading to a career or technical credential, industry certification, or college degree.

The Governor's measure of success for S2C is an overall increase in post-secondary education attainment of 20 percent by 2012.

To reach this goal, the Governor asked Lt. Governor Brown to lead the effort, and called on multiple agencies and systems across the State to work together to attain the 2012 goal. Additionally, the Governor designated the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) as the S2C Advisory Board, and utilized an existing Interagency Workforce Committee (IWC) staffed by the GWIB as the vehicle for implementation. Since March 2010 the IWC has met regularly to discuss common goals, performance measurement related to postsecondary education attainment, and strategies for policy alignment. As a public-private board, the GWIB is a strong choice for coordinating multi-agency collaboration. The Maryland GWIB was also well positioned to coordinate the S2C initiative based on the content of its own 2010-2012 strategic plan, which emphasizes strategies to support career pathway development across multiple systems, as well as improved industry engagement through sector strategies.

In June 2010, the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) was commissioned to track and assess the general strategies and activities undertaken by the agencies, departments and programs participating in S2C. CSW was not an evaluator, nor a counter of

Members of the Interagency Workforce Committee

- Governor's Workforce Investment Board
- Department of Business and Economic Development
- Division of Rehabilitation Services, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- Division of Career and College Success (CTE), MSDE
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Department of Disabilities
- Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
- Maryland Higher Education Commission
- Department of Human Services
- Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)
- Division of Adult and Correctional Education, DLLR
- Department of Aging
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Maryland Association of Community Colleges
- Maryland's Local Workforce Investment Boards

credentials, but instead was asked to assess the process and goals of S2C Maryland, and, based on its national experience and knowledge of workforce and postsecondary education, to make policy recommendations that would help Maryland make achieving the goals of S2C real and long-term. CSW was also asked to help share the S2C Maryland story with other states, all of which are either actively thinking or acting on the questions of increased credential attainment. This report offers insights into Maryland's experience, activities, and achievements.

A key early step in the S2C effort was the development of individual strategies and goals by each partner agency, and by each of Maryland's sixteen community colleges. Every partner submitted individual strategies, action steps and performance measures that are collectively tracked by the GWIB. These strategies and performance measures were detailed in the Skills2Compete Maryland Action Plan (September 2010) and are summarized on page six.

Shared Values and Goals of the Interagency Workforce Committee

CSW conducted interviews with the members of the IWC during the summer of 2010 (see appendix for complete list of interview participants) to find out how individual agencies perceived the goals of the effort, the major barriers to success, and the achievements to date of their participation. CSW's interviews and research yielded a set of strong themes, including agreement across all partner agencies and divisions that:

- **Post-secondary credentials must hold real currency in the labor market** (whether from workforce or academic programs) (i.e., they must be validated by industry);
- **Credentials must be portable** from institution to institution, as well as region to region in the job market;
- **Clear career pathway programs are necessary** within education and training for individuals to successfully advance and embrace lifelong learning;
- **Aggressive career awareness and educational opportunity campaigns are needed** to ensure that all Marylanders who want to pursue post-secondary education are able to do so;
- **Currently, access to post-secondary education is severely limited** by the financial aid restrictions for Marylanders who cannot afford to pursue education on their own incomes;

Using S2C to Connect, Align, and Share Accountability for Success

Skills2Compete Strategies	Performance Measures	Supporting Agencies
1. Increase number of degrees and certificates awarded by community colleges and increase enrollment in workforce courses	Number of enrollments in community colleges Completion rates of private career schools	Community colleges Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
2. Increase enrollment in occupational skills training	Number of active participants in skills development training Number of active veterans and disabled persons participating	Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) Local Workforce Investment Boards
3. Expand incumbent worker training initiative (MD Business Works)	Number of incumbent workers receiving MBW training Number of employers utilizing MBW training	DLLR
4. Increase number of registered apprentice program graduates and number of apprenticeship programs	Number of apprenticeship program graduates Number of registered apprentices; number of new apprentice programs	DLLR Apprentice Program
5. Increase inmate participation in apprenticeships and national certificate programs	Number of occupational certificates awarded to inmates Number of inmates who complete employment readiness & workforce classes	DLLR Workforce & Adult Ed Division Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)
6. Increase number of adult education participants who enter post secondary education or training	Number of adult education participants entering post secondary education or training measured by enrollment	DLLR Workforce & Adult Ed Division
7. Increase number of CTE graduates attaining industry certifications, licensure or early college credit	Percent of CTE graduates meeting entry requirements for MD university system Percent of CTE graduates who earned industry recognized credentials	Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
8. Increase number of MD RISE participants completing occupational training and attainment of industry recognized certificates	Number of training partnerships developed Number of customers enrolled in occupational skills training; number of customers who complete training	Department of Human Resources (DHR)
9. Increase number of persons with disabilities who attain post secondary education	Number of WTC Career Tech program graduates Number of DORS clients sponsored in post secondary and career programs	Maryland Department of Disabilities — Workforce Training Center
10. Expand participation in state weatherization training program	Number of participants in state weatherization training Number of participants who MD RISE	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

- **The S2C Maryland initiative is providing a powerful lever for systems to work together** to find solutions to persistent questions about which credentials are right (and how that is validated), questions about uptake of credentials and how to
- **The S2C Maryland initiative is providing an opportunity for systems to align** missions, policies and programs in a way that has not occurred in previous state initiatives.

Follow-up interviews and deeper conversations with the IWC members confirmed that the S2C initiative presents an opportunity for lasting change at the collective systems level (i.e., how systems better align and coordinate); at the individual agency or department level; and at the program delivery level. The following recommendations are based on these findings and grouped into five action areas. These recommendations are grounded by what the IWC can do right now to move S2C forward, and make the S2C principles part of lasting systems change across Maryland’s agencies.

Policy and Program Choices for S2C Maryland

Action Area: Make Education Accessible by Retooling Curriculum and Delivery

Much of the current national literature about credential attainment reminds us that “non-traditional” students are the new normal at community colleges. S2C offers Maryland an opportunity to critically think about how education and training institutions reconfigure the offerings and delivery mechanisms for coursework that best reflect current learner needs.

RECOMMENDATION 1	Create an Innovative Instruction Community of Practice learning group for post-secondary institutions to learn about and apply promising practices related to making courses more accessible to working adults, including improved assessment, online access, course modularization, integrated basic and occupational skills training, and flexible scheduling. Focus on community colleges, but keep the Community open to other programs. Sharing lessons learned about what works can be a powerful tool to bring promising practices to scale, and requires minimal resources.
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Strategies include improved placement assessment tools, course modularization, online and hybrid learning, and flexible scheduling as well as integrated basic skills and occupational training strategies. They also include incorporating the latest research on how individuals learn and process information, including improved assessments, supports and responses to hidden disabilities that may impede student success and progress. These innovative strategies have been shown to increase success in less time

and with fewer resources, but across the nation they are still isolated to individual campuses or programs, and therefore do not address the needs of millions of adult learners. Recent data suggests that 60 percent of all students at community colleges require remedial education, but only 25 percent requiring remedial coursework actually complete an Associate degree or equivalent over the course of eight years.¹

To address the cost and low success rates of remedial education, some states are developing more precise assessment tools. In **Tennessee**, community colleges use a secondary diagnostic exam that identifies unique needs of students, enabling customized responses instead of requiring students to enroll in multiple semesters of remedial courses covering broad topics that may not be relevant. The exam has increased student success, reduced time to degree and cut costs. In **Washington State**, the nationally renowned Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program synchronizes remedial education and occupational training toward a certificate, allowing students to move quickly through basic education. A review by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College found that Adult Basic Education students in I-BEST programs were 82 percent more likely to earn college credit. By engaging state legislators early in the development process, Washington State was able to secure legislation allowing for funding to colleges at a 1.75 Full Time Equivalency in order to cover the costs of basic education and occupational skills instructors in each I-BEST classroom. With seed funding from the Joyce Foundation, **Minnesota** replicated the Washington model, developing the Fastrac pilot program. By closely connecting the concept and planning phases with their Shifting Gears initiative (a cross-systems change initiative focused on workforce and post-secondary education policy coordination), they were able to leverage funding from State Workforce Investment Act Title I and II funding streams, as well as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding and private funding from United Way.

Maryland has already made strides toward embedding these strategies into existing programs. Most recently, the Maryland Workforce Corporation (a non-profit workforce development organization that works on behalf of the State of Maryland), received funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to develop the MI-BEST program (Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training). MI-BEST will allow five community colleges to develop, replicate and pilot Washington State's I-Best model. The Department of Human Resource's Maryland RISE (Reaching Independence and Stability through Employment) approach is another example, which emphasizes work readiness and basic skills education in its occupational training offerings for welfare recipients. MD RISE aligns its training with critical industry sectors targeted by the GWIB.

¹ Complete to Compete Briefing Paper: *Return on Investment – Strategies for Improving Remedial Education*, 2010-2011 NGA Chair's Initiative, National Governors Association.

Interviews with Adult and Correctional Education within the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the Department of Juvenile Services, and with the Department of Rehabilitation Services confirmed strong interest in adopting innovative instructional strategies.

The S2C IWC should:

- **Establish a community of practice that allows multiple systems and programs to share innovative strategies, and to build the case for policy changes that support their implementation;**
- **Assess the promising practices that come out of the community for applicability and replicability to target populations that are important to Maryland, such as individuals with disabilities; and**
- **Be the forum for discussion around needed policy changes related to innovative instruction and practice, similar to the Shifting Gears Initiative in Minnesota.**

RECOMMENDATION 2	Investigate (and invent) workplace-based learning models where post-secondary education institutions work directly with employers to create learning environments at their places of work for employees to upgrade their skills, receive academic credit, and be eligible for financial aid. These strategies are bold but important because they combine the principles of engaging employers in post-secondary and workforce education with the realities of busy, working adults <i>and</i> a community college system with limited capacity.
---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Nationally the recession has provided a showcase for the value of community colleges and has reinforced the widespread policy agreement that at least one year of post-secondary education is essential for individuals to attach or re-attach to the new labor market. Maryland’s community college efforts within S2C reveal widespread commitment to this ideal. But similar to other states, Maryland’s colleges are facing heavier pressure to meet capacity as a result.

Some states are addressing this challenge by experimenting with workplace-based learning models. During the development of the new **Kentucky Community and Technical College System**, training programs of companies and apprenticeships were assessed and embedded as credit-bearing within formalized programs at colleges.

The **Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board**, in partnership with the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Washington State Labor Council, the Association of Washington Business Institute, the Washington Workforce Association, and State Legislators have worked together to develop a statewide concept for

increasing postsecondary education completion by bringing coursework and instruction to the workplace, and by leveraging online technologies to make workplace-based learning efficient and effective. The partners applied for General Appropriations through U.S. Senator Patty Murray for funding to support pilots. The *Workplace-Based Distance Learning for Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Adults* initiative was approved, and Washington hopes to begin implementation in 2011.

Maryland could join the still small ranks of cutting edge states exploring workplace-based learning models, where workforce training programs, on-the-job training or internships are jointly developed and approved by post-secondary education institutions and employers. The REACH (Resources and Education for the Advancement of Careers at Hopkins), funded in 2004 by a U.S. Department of Labor grant, is a strong example of a partnership between a large employer (Johns Hopkins Medical System), community colleges and one-stop centers (among other partners) to develop on-site remedial training and occupational training (such as anastheisa critical care technicians, surgery technicians, and medical coding) for existing entry-level workers. The training is coordinated with courses at colleges so trainees have the opportunity to continue course work on a career pathway. Another recent example is the on-the-job training within the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) effort that counts as credit at Towson State and Morgan State Universities toward specific credentials.

The S2C IWC should:

- **Bring the best models of workplace-based learning to Maryland by commissioning a small research project that scans other state activities.**
- **Provide the findings to all IWC members to share with their colleagues and local programs. Consider a webinar to share the findings, using one or two national experts as speakers.**
- **Use the IWC as a vehicle for discussing how Maryland might experiment with workplace based models, including combining and/or finding funding for two or three local pilot sites.**

What often is overlooked in our constant push for building a competitive workforce is the complexity of making education and training more accessible to our lowest skilled workers, who must overcome tremendous barriers to attend a traditional classroom setting. To be competitive in the 21st century, we need to use our new technologies better to deliver that training where we know our working poor have to be each day . . . the workplace.

— David Harrison
Former Chair, Washington
State Workforce Training
and Education Coordinating
Board

Action Area: Identify and Strengthen Processes to Involve Industry

Clearly, the members of the IWC share a strong commitment to finding ways to engage with industry that will result in education and training programs that provide real currency in the labor market for Maryland jobseekers and workers. The level of interest by IWC members in learning *how* to best engage industry in this endeavor is high. As a result, two clear opportunities exist for Maryland: sharing best practices for validating coursework and credentials via industry input, and advancing the concepts of sector partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION 3	Profile and share broadly any processes that effectively identify the precise skills standards, tasks and competencies of critical occupations, and the processes to transfer them into coursework and credentials so individuals graduate with real currency in the labor market.
---------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Across the nation there is a lively debate on how to best validate the thousands of credentials offered by public and private education institutions. Within this national dialogue, there is agreement that institutions must have processes in place to define the skills workers need for specific occupations and careers; that programs must be responsive to ensure workers gain these competencies; and that workers earn credentials that communicate their competencies to employers so they can obtain meaningful employment.

There is *not* yet agreement on what this process should be. Fortunately, there are emerging promising practices, including the *Energy Industry Skills Standards Project at Centralia Community College in Washington State*. The Project so far has developed skill standard manuals for fifteen critical occupations, including wind power technicians, combustion turbine technicians and power plant operators.² Note that it is *not the actual standards* that will be important for Maryland (although they may be useful), but the process that the Project takes to articulate and define the standards. The process surveys subject matter experts, workers and managers to identify critical work functions, key activities, performance indicators and knowledge, skills and abilities; verifies the data through focus groups with broader groups of workers and employers; and uses workplace scenarios to identify the basic, technical and industry-specific skills needed by a worker in that occupation. The resulting skill standards manuals are used by college, workforce and apprenticeship programs to improve or develop new coursework, as well as by employers to improve job descriptions and on-the-job training.

² All skills standards manuals are shared at: www.learningconnections.org/ss/energy.html

Maryland is no stranger to identifying evidence-based processes for industry engagement in the design of education and training. The GWIB convenes industry steering committees across thirteen target industries, building on its *Center for Industry Initiatives Comprehensive Process Guide*³, which provides a working template to develop, implement and sustain approaches for assessing and addressing industry workforce needs. Maryland’s Division of Career and College Success (Career and Technical Education) within the Department of Education similarly coordinates (as required by the Federal Perkins program) industry advisory committees for each of their 48 programs.

The S2C initiative offers Maryland an opportunity to cross-check what is working within Maryland to engage industry members in ways that directly improve coursework and the development of credentials.

The IWC should:

- **Create a brief promising practices report that shares the existing processes for identifying the skills standards of critical occupations. Share it widely.**
- **Assess where duplication and gaps exist across the multiple industry advisory committees currently convened by different agencies and programs across Maryland. Agree to find ways to reduce duplication and leverage input from industry members.**
- **Engage high school career and technical teachers, counselors and curriculum specialists in a process that assesses and addresses industry workforce needs so that they remain current in awareness of opportunities that exist in the labor market.**
- **Investigate ways to use public investments to encourage alignment of local education and training programs with existing and emerging high-quality national standards, especially where skills shortages are clear.**
- **Encourage regional sector partnerships to develop skill standards for critical occupations, and to change education and training at the program level that better fits industry needs.**

³ Building Your Industry’s Workforce: A Demand Driven Approach to Workforce Development – Industry Initiative Comprehensive Process Guide, Governors Workforce Investment Board, State of Maryland, 2006: <http://www.mdworkforce.com/lib/pdf/processguide.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 4	Continue to advance the concepts of sector partnerships to local stakeholders across workforce, education and economic development. Sector partnerships are proven to be effective vehicles to link employers’ needs for skilled workers to workers’ needs for good jobs, and are powerful ways to coordinate across local education, training and support programs.
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

A sector partnership is a regional, employer-driven partnership of industry, education and training, and other stakeholders that focus on the workforce education and training needs of a single key industry in a regional labor market. Sector partnerships rely on a convener or organizer to engage employers and to coordinate information and resources across partners to develop and implement effective, coordinated responses to shared workforce challenges. They are most commonly convened by local workforce boards, but are also successfully organized by community based organizations, community colleges and labor management organizations.

Sector partnerships are considered highly responsive to industry demand when compared to traditional job-matching and training services because they:

- Are problem-oriented, not program-oriented;
- Address employer needs interdependently, not independently;
- Work with employers in a target industry collectively, not as individual firms; and
- Develop customized, accurate solutions to the needs of employers in the target industry, and on behalf of jobseekers and workers in their region.

Today, 25 states are either designing or implementing sector partnerships through their local workforce boards, community based organizations, colleges and other local entities. The sector partnership model is growing nationally because it shows success for employers, workers, and public systems responsible for making shrinking dollars go further. A recent random-assignment evaluation of three skills training sector initiatives showed that participants in these initiatives earned 18 percent more over a 24 month period than the control group because they were more likely to work, worked more consistently, and worked in jobs with higher wages. They also had higher quality jobs as measured by the availability of benefits such as health insurance, paid vacation and paid sick leave.⁴ A survey of employers in the State of Massachusetts showed that 41 percent of them reported that participating in the sector initiative led to a reduction in turnover; 19 percent reported a reduction in rework; 23 percent reported a reduction in customer complaints; and 100 percent of companies reported that participation in the

⁴ Tuning into Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Study, Public/Private Ventures, July 2010

sector partnerships were valuable.⁵ In Pennsylvania, 84 percent of employers who were surveyed reported significant increases in productivity.⁶

The GWIB made sector strategies a key priority in its 2010-2012 Strategic Plan, held a Sector Training Academy for all local workforce boards and other partners in 2009, and continues to offer technical assistance to local boards interested in implementing sector partnerships in industries critical to their local economy. A shining example is the partnership coordinated by the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH). This non-profit corporation coordinates across 80 local partners to address high unemployment and underemployment rates of Baltimore City residents, and to fill the high turnover and vacancy rates of healthcare occupations. Partners include community colleges, Baltimore City Public Schools, one-stop centers, community based organizations, small and large healthcare employers, and foundations. They focus on on-the-job career coaching, career mapping and pathway development, pre-allied healthcare career programs, occupational training and summer internships. Between 2005 and 2010, the partnership has trained over 1000 individuals, and their career coaching programs show a 32% increase in retention rates after 18 months.

The sector partnership model offers a powerful vehicle at the local level for long-term relationships with employers and a way to align multiple public programs, which will help S2C realize long term attainment of labor market-relevant credentials by Marylanders .

The IWC should find ways to:

- **Provide more learning opportunities to local stakeholders about the sector partnership model, and highlight existing sector partnerships that are seeing results;**
- **Consider using WIA discretionary or other funding to seed the development of sector partnerships across Maryland’s local areas;**
- **Make the concept of sector partnerships a key part of coordinated messaging from state-level departments, including leadership from DLLR, MACC and MSDE. A unified message across systems is a powerful way to incent partnerships at the local level.**

⁵ Cathryn, L. “BEST Benefits: Employer Perspectives Research and Evaluation Brief”, Commonwealth Corporation, October 2004.

⁶ Industry Partnerships in Pennsylvania, Booklet, Pennsylvania Workforce Development, April 2009

Action Area: Make Post Secondary Education Work for those who Need Work

IWC members agree that career pathway development is essential to making postsecondary education understandable and accessible to individuals. Successful career pathway policies and programs do not belong to just educational institutions. They are the responsibility of many different agencies and programs working together, and they only work when systems collectively ask and answer the following questions:

- Do industry and employers understand how needed skills/competencies are part of a naturally existing career pathway within their company or sector?
- Do Maryland’s state agencies/ departments, local programs and colleges understand how they each fit into a collective system that moves individuals along an educational career pathway and up the ladder in an industry?
- Do individuals understand how to access the right education and training programs at the right time that lead to labor-market relevant credentials along a career pathway?

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Use the Interagency Working Committee to come to a common understanding of what career pathways are and what it takes to implement them, including understanding the natural career advancement paths within industry; how education, training and support programs fit together to make it possible for individuals to advance; and the career awareness campaigns necessary for individuals to access the right education at the right time.</p>
----------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Since 2006, **Oregon** has invested in the development of career pathways in high demand, middle-skill occupations, first investing in five colleges and now boasting a statewide Career Pathway Initiative in all 17 colleges. They define career pathways as a series of connected education and training programs and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation.⁷ Funding for career pathway programs includes federal Perkins, Workforce Investment Act, and community college general funds, as well as U.S. DOL grants. Implementation relies on the collaboration of multiple state agencies via a Statewide Steering Committee that includes the Governor’s office, Department of Education, Economic Development, University System, Adult Basic Education, Community Colleges and Workforce Development. At the program level, an online community of practice for practitioners and educators exists to share promising practices. Over 250 roadmaps have been

⁷ See <http://www.worksourceoregon.org/index.php/career-pathways> for details.

developed, along with plans of study templates, and an intensive marketing campaign including organizing course catalogues by pathways, creating a YouTube video aired over 10,000 times on public television in 2009, and a website (www.MyPathCareers.org/cp).

In many ways, the S2C goal of 20 percent by 2020 is an organizing principle to foster increased alignment among agencies and programs about how their efforts can support a cohesive career pathways system. To make this vision real, it is imperative that each partner in S2C clearly sees which of its programs do best, *and what they do not do well*, and to then determine how to use policy decisions at the agency level to ensure that programs each fulfill their roles and responsibilities to achieve the common agenda of S2C. The IWC should:

- Build on the existing cross-agency S2C action plan that identifies individual agency goals and strategies for S2C by using the IWC to clearly map out how each agency engaged in S2C fit together to ensure that individuals access the education, supports, credentials and jobs they need to succeed. Ask and answer: what role does each agency and relevant program at the state level play to build a career pathway system?;
- Continue identifying and mapping career pathways in critical industries, and find ways to share this information broadly so each program and system can see where they play a role; and
- Increase opportunities for high school and out- of-school youth to become career ready, understand requirements of the workplace, and prepare for various career pathways.

The recent career pathway pilot funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Pathways out of Poverty grant, and coordinated by the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board is an excellent opportunity to map at the program level how different systems must work together to: identify the natural career pathways in a critical industry; organize across education and training to create clear modules of learning that advance students up the career pathway; organize across support programs so that students are able to stay engaged through completion; and create the right career awareness campaigns so jobseekers understand what courses and credentials they need to get a job they want.

RECOMMENDATION 6	Take on the challenge of converting non-credit courses to for-credit credentials, and make credits transferrable across campuses. As workers seek to remain competitive either by upgrading current skills or learning new skills, they need a way to convert their non-credit learning into academic credit, as well as to transfer credits from prior learning that might lead to a credential and/or a career pathway. State policy and institutional level actions will be required.
---------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

IWC members share concerns about the persistent challenge of connecting non-credit and credit programs within and across systems. At the state level, funding and performance tracking barriers keep credit and non-credit programs from connecting. State funding formulas are mostly based on per-credit enrollment and subsidies are largely non-existent for non-credit programming. Lack of consistency in states regarding the identification of key metrics of non-credit programs (e.g. hours of training, unduplicated enrollment, type of programs, outcomes) is a challenge, as are inconsistent methods of assessing and recording non-credit and prior learning among post-secondary institutions. Most states do not have guidelines for listing non-credit courses on a transcript, leaving the decision up to institutions.

Non-credit courses include some short-term training supported by workforce agencies, customized programs sponsored by companies or other organizations to meet specific incumbent worker training needs, developmental education to prepare students for college-level work, and most English as a Second Language classes. In some institutions, particularly community colleges, non-credit offerings constitute a significant portion of the college’s enrollment. At the institutional level, non-credit courses are often easier to implement, as the content and format is not bogged down by approval protocols. Often non-credit programs are one of the few ways for programs to cover costs completely (can charge varying fees; not so with credit offerings). Typically the academic policy and practice side of a post-secondary institution is completely independent from the workforce/continuing education side. For students and jobseekers, the disconnect between non-credit courses and for-credit programs can mean never earning any sort of postsecondary education credential.

In **Indiana** the 23 colleges of the Ivy Tech Community College System employ a certification crosswalk system which requires each college to automatically award a certain number of credits for approved industry certifications and apprenticeships. The colleges also reached agreement on a consistent approach to portfolio assessments of prior learning, including what constitutes proper documentation of prior learning. The system saves students time by facilitating ease of transfer and re-entry, and saves colleges resources by reducing individual review time.⁸ Like Ivy Tech, the *Center for*

⁸ For more information, <http://www.ivytech.edu/prior-learning/>.

Adult Learning in Louisiana (CALL) facilitated the development of a common prior learning portfolio assessment across two- and four-year public colleges and universities. The portfolios are assessed by commonly trained faculty members for college credit. In *Ohio* the Board of Regents partnered with the Office of Career and Technical Education, public secondary education, and institutions of higher education to establish criteria, policies and procedures for consistently awarding college credit for agreed upon technical knowledge and skills that align with industry standards. Similarly, in *Kentucky*, the Community and Technical College System assigns college credit to industry-approved exams. For example, the Information Technology program allows students who pass an industry standard certification exam (such as the CISCO Certified Network Administrator or A+ certification) to earn up to 24 credits toward an Associate degree. *Kentucky* took additional steps to integrate their non-credit and for-credit programs, including changing the organizational structure of colleges so that all instruction falls under the same administrative unit. This ensures mission integration of academic, developmental and occupational programs.

The Maryland Adult External Diploma Program could be a model to build on toward the examples above. The EDP is not a classroom-based program, but instead works with adults to create portfolios that demonstrate academic and life skills that merit award of a high school diploma. During 2010, the EDP awarded approximately 600 diplomas to Marylanders.

The IWC has an opportunity to study the above barriers closely, and identify potential policy changes at the institutional level and state systems level.

The IWC should:

- **Make it an IWC priority to jointly develop processes to ensure credit can be earned from non-credit work, and develop processes for evaluating existing non-credit courses for credit and for articulation into the next credential on a career pathway. Start with assessment of industry certifications and apprenticeship programs.**
- **Organize a sub-committee to assess current prior learning processes, documentation and outcomes across Maryland’s community colleges. Find commonalities and begin developing a consistent methodology, similar to Ivy Tech’s crosswalk for prior learning.**
- **Explore ways to develop consistent metrics that track non-credit learning and outcomes both in economic value and transition to credit programs.**

Action Area: Make Education Affordable

State and local governments in 2009 spent \$88.8 billion to fund public higher education, but according to one federal estimate, less than 60 percent of students can expect to get a certificate or degree within six years.⁹ The IWC should look to other states that have taken bold action to address financial barriers for individuals to succeed in postsecondary education.

<p>Recommendation</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Re-purpose existing resources into financial aid programs and find ways to increase completion with fewer resources so that post-secondary education is accessible to Marylanders who cannot otherwise afford to complete a credential program. Almost unanimously, the members of the IWC agree that the most persistent barrier for Marylanders to succeed in post-secondary education is the prohibitive cost of education.</p>
----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In 2007, **Michigan**'s Governor announced a new initiative, **No Worker Left Behind (NWLB)**. This statewide retraining initiative pays up to \$5,000 per year for up to two total years for at-risk adult Michiganders to pursue a degree or certificate at a community college or other approved training provider in a regionally-based high-demand occupation. NWLB experienced a large take-up rate, resulting in more than 150,000 workers participating. To provide this funding support to that large of a group, Michigan officials realized that reprogramming funding would be required. The state created workgroups with local workforce board directors and community colleges to develop shared goals, work through needed standardizing of service delivery approaches and funding rules, and to create statewide branding of the effort. As a result, \$40 million in federal funds were repurposed (primarily Workforce Investment Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and Vocational Rehabilitation funds) to support implementation. Local workforce boards allocated greater proportions of their funding to training in high demand occupations, and prioritized longer-term training and opportunities available through degree-granting institutions. The State did the same with discretionary and state-controlled funding, and aggressively pursued supplemental TAA funding and grants from U.S. DOL, as well as state general funds (\$15 million in FY2008).

In **Arkansas**, revenue from a new state lottery is fully earmarked for a state-funded needs-based scholarship program for returning students or "near completers." Other states are pursuing ways to reduce costs for institutions as well as individual students. Realizing that even small changes make a big difference, the **South Dakota** Board of Regents is exploring ways for institutions to remove financial holds (for parking tickets, library fines,

⁹ Complete to Compete Briefing Paper: *Follow the Money: Strategies for Using Finance to Leverage Change in Higher Education*, 2010-2011 NGA Chair's Initiative, National Governors Association.

tuition under \$1,000) that often bar students from registering for classes when they need them. The **Tennessee** Board of Regents is leading an effort to redesign remedial education so students can move quickly by only focusing on areas where they have skill gaps, allowing a fast track approach that saves institutions and students money.

Many institutions are using online learning technology to find ways to cut costs of classroom instruction. The **Kentucky Community and Technical College System** has comprehensively embraced online learning modules and hybrid instruction (classroom instruction supplemented with online tools). Students are moving through programs faster and with improved outcomes. According the National Center for Academic Transformation, a study of 30 redesigned “hybrid” programs at four-year institutions found they reduced per student labor costs by as much as 75 percent.¹⁰

Other promising strategies include finding ways to expand financial aid to individuals. In 2010, **Indiana’s** Governor Mitch Daniels issued an executive order making Western Governors University the State’s eighth public university. WGU was originally created by a consortium of 19 governors in 1997 as a completely online, non-profit, fully accredited university. By making WGU a public university, Governor Daniel’s executive order makes state financial aid available to WGU students, ensures transfer of credit, and helps returning dislocated workers access online courses toward new degrees.¹¹ Redesigning non-credit workforce training programs to fit the criteria for Pell grant eligibility is another promising strategy, such as the Surgical Technology and Medical Assistant programs at the Community College of Baltimore County

Maryland has an opportunity to tackle big and small changes that will reduce costs of education for individuals and institutions.

The IWC should:

- **Recommend the creation of a unified retraining initiative to help meet the S2C goals, targeting those most in need of a labor market relevant credential, and those most ready (i.e. “near completers”) to advance and complete;**
- **Establish a commitment spanning all the partner agencies making education and training investment a shared priority and align funds in support of the unified retraining initiative;**
- **Identify barriers at the institutional level that make it difficult for individuals to access financial aid, as well as barriers such as financial holds that prevent students from advancing and completing;**

¹⁰ For a complete analysis of the Program in Course Redesign, see <http://www.thencat.org/PCR.htm>.

¹¹ Complete to Compete Briefing Paper: *Breaking the Mold – New Approaches for Higher Education in Tough Economic Times*, 2010-2011 NGA Chair’s Initiative, National Governors Association.

- Find ways to extend awareness of post-secondary opportunities by providing greater awareness of and access to financial aid and scholarship opportunities for current high school students and out-of-school youth; and
- Be aggressive about adopting online and hybrid teaching technologies that increase access by working adults, and improve actual instruction. Use the Innovative Instruction Community of Practice to share promising practices.

Action Area: Move from Tracking Attainment to Creating Shared Outcomes

States and Governors have unique opportunities to use data systems to link labor market demand with education and training supply, and to create tracking systems that follow individuals from education to jobs. Every state keeps wage records data, and most have access to curriculum and transcript information, but few states have tied wage records to postsecondary certificates or degrees, and those that do have not found ways to present this information in user-friendly ways, leaving policy makers and the public still in the dark.

RECOMMENDATION 8	Continue to aggressively track performance measures related to post-secondary education attainment across systems so that policy and program decisions can be informed by real outcomes of individuals moving in and out of Maryland’s diverse systems. Integrate remedial education outcomes, as well as an improved understanding of “near-completers” into the overall tracking systems currently being developed.
---------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

It is clear that IWC members are committed to effectively using and tracking data to find out how people fare in the labor market after education and training. IWC members indicated a shared desire to shift from tracking enrollment to tracking completion and job placement across relevant systems and programs. Members do not underestimate the effort and resource commitment this kind of shift entails, but recognize the significant transparency and analysis opportunities it would afford the state.

Maryland is well positioned to take on this complex task using its “Race to the Top” money to invest in a P-20 Longitudinal Data System that will track education and workforce data across the Department of Education; the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation; the Higher Education Commission; and the University System of Maryland. Combined with the Governor’s nationally recognized “State-stat” requirements and the current tracking of Skills2Compete strategies and goals across

member agencies, Maryland could create a truly cutting edge data system that informs policy and program changes across education, workforce development and economic development.

Because so many postsecondary education students require remedial education, as indicated earlier in this Study, Maryland should play close attention to how this is defined and tracked. Very few states gather comprehensive data on who is enrolled in remedial education, how they perform and the associated costs. The **University of Hawaii’s community colleges** collect and report on who enrolls in remedial education, how they perform in those courses as well as in college courses, whether they earn a credential, and the costs of remedial instruction. The result is a comprehensive snapshot of the return on investment for the State.¹²

Understanding which Marylanders can be defined as “near completers” and targeting strategies to encourage them to finish academic programs is an important part of reaching the S2C goal of increased attainment by 20 percent by 2012. According the Lumina Foundation for Education, more than 22 percent of working age adults in the U.S. — over 37 million individuals — have attended college but never earned a credential. The subset of these that have not returned to college but were close to earning a degree upon departure offer a unique opportunity within the Maryland S2C goal. Many strategies already highlighted in this Study can address the needs of returning students (improved assessment of remedial needs, redesign of remedial courses, prior learning assessments and credit transferability, online access, changes to financial aid, etc), but first Maryland must identify and understand their “near completer” population. **South Dakota** conducted an initial evaluation of near completers and identified more than 2,500 students who had dropped out after completing more than 90 credit hours, and who still lived in proximity to a campus.¹³ **Arkansas** conducted a similar study.

As part of the Joyce Foundation’s Shifting Gears initiative, six Great lakes region states are each working on creating or expanding the means within their states’ data systems to track the flow of students from one level of education to another.

The IWC should:

- **Find the intersections between what will be tracked between the Longitudinal Data System and the S2C performance measures so that**

¹² Complete to Compete Briefing Paper: *Return on Investment – Strategies for Improving Remedial Education*, 2010-2011 NGA Chair’s Initiative, National Governors Association.

¹³ Complete to Compete Briefing Paper: *Crossing the Finish Line – Helping Adults with Significant College Credit Get Back on Track to a College Degree*, 2010-2011 NGA Chair’s Initiative, National Governors Association.

Maryland can begin building a world class comprehensive tracking system, including remedial education outcomes.

- Use internal research resources or commission a small study to identify and profile Maryland’s “near-completer” population, including sub-sets of this group with higher likelihoods of non-completion such as individuals with disabilities, adult learners, hispanic or other Limited English speaking persons. Use this to inform S2C awareness campaigns and to change policy and program barriers for “near completers” to succeed.

RECOMMENDATION 9	Use the S2C opportunity to push toward shared definitions of outcomes , and to answer the hard questions about what Maryland wants its post-secondary education and training institutions to be held accountable, including establishing incentives to get there.
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Maryland’s intensive and comprehensive tracking of performance measures and outcomes related to education, training and placement present a unique opportunity for the IWC to seriously discuss a set of common definitions of outcomes, and to investigate appropriate incentives for various agency and program partners to achieve them.

A handful of states are exploring strategies that connect performance to funding. Maryland has used tuition freezes to incent institutions to find and reinvest cost savings back into strategies for student advancement and completion. **Virginia** took a different route by granting increased tuition authority to colleges and universities willing to accept statewide transfer agreements and certain accountability metrics. **Washington State** is considering a similar strategy.

- Use the IWC as a place (a laboratory or design hub) to discuss and play out shared definitions of outcomes across systems related to current performance measures;
- Design different possible scenarios for performance based funding connected to shared outcomes, and to discussing the policy implications;
- Offer recommendations to the Governor’s office that will create stronger incentives for education and training institutions to be more collaborative and productive.

Action Area: Make the S2C Maryland Initiative More Than an Initiative

Finally, it is clear that IWC members see S2C Maryland as a unique opportunity to create a systemic approach to giving Marylanders access to the education and credentials that lead to existing and emerging jobs and careers, and that by doing so Maryland’s economy will remain competitive. The Governor’s Office and the IWC have an opportunity to continue using S2C Maryland as an organizing platform for lasting policy change across systems.

RECOMMENDATION 10	Keep using the momentum created by S2C and the existing Interagency Work Committee infrastructure as a lever to find solutions for persistent attainment and job placement challenges, and as a way for systems to truly align missions, policies and programs to benefit individuals and companies.
----------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The IWC should:

- **Review major policies and regulations to identify potential barriers to reaching S2C attainment goals;**
- **Agree to identify policy changes that can be made at the individual Agency level that will increase a focus on middle-skill credential attainment;**
- **Identify where missions, policies and programs can be aligned to specifically benefit Marylanders seeking post-secondary education credentials; and**
- **Create a Recommendations report for the Lt. Governor by the end of 2011 that identifies the top ten policy actions needed to realize the S2C goals and to make increases in post-secondary education completion ongoing.**

S2C Completed Interview List

Mr. Jeff Beeson

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Adult & Correctional Education, Department of Labor,
Licensing and Regulation

Mr. Frank Coakley

Assistant Secretary, Department of Housing & Community Development

Ms. Bonnie Cosgrove

Director of Integrated Program Services, Office of Treatment Services, Department of
Public Safety & Correctional Services

Ms. Molly Dugan

Education Coordinator, Department of Juvenile Services

Ms. Danette Howard Gerald, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Planning, Research Analysis & Workforce Development

Ms. Jade Gingerich

Director of Employment Policy, Department of Disabilities

Ms. Kara Hamilton

Special Assistant, Office of Secretary, Department of Human Services

Mr. John Huegelmeyer

Bureau Chief, Research and Evaluation, Department of Human Resources

Mr. Dean Kendall

Education Analyst, Career/Workforce Education, Maryland Higher Education
Commission

Mr. Daniel McDermott

Executive Director, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board

Ms. Pat Mikos

Program Manager, Student and Assessment Services Branch, Division of Career &
Technology Education, Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Katharine Oliver

Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Career & College Success (CTE), Maryland State
Department of Education

Ms. Suzanne Page

Assistant State Superintendent Division of Rehabilitation Services, Maryland State
Department of Education

Mr. Brad Phillips

Research Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges

Ms. Christine Plater

Director, Office of Workforce Development Services and Strategic Assistance, Department of Business and Economic Development

Ms. Elise Reuschenburg

Special Assistant to the Director, Community Development Administration, Department of Housing & Community Development

Ms. Stacey Rodgers

Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Resources

Ms. Ilene Rosenthal

Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging

Ms. Patricia Tyler

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Adult Education, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Mr. Robert Walker

Assistant Secretary of Business & Enterprise Development, Department of Business and Economic Development

Mr. Clay Whitlow

Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges

Mr. Barry Williams

Former Chair, Investment Network for Maryland, Former Executive Director, Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development

Ms. Alice Wirth

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Correctional Education, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Compiled by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce for S2C Maryland, May 2011, with generous support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Skills Coalition.

Founded in 1991, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce is a national, non-profit policy research and practice organization located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Our mission: CSW catalyzes nationwide transformative change in education, economic, and workforce development through research and action.

Lindsey Woolsey
Director, Business and Industry
Strategies
lwoolsey@skilledwork.org

(509) 826-7991
CSW 1100 Victors Way, Suite 10
Ann Arbor, MI 48108 734.769.2900