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# Using Data to Advance Equitable Change

## An Intermediary's Guide to Measuring for Equity


AT A GLANCE

Intermediaries work to improve, vertically align, and systematize the components of career pathways. They are also crucial actors in centering racial equity within pathways work—as advocates, designers, and accountability partners. In these roles intermediaries analyze data within a given program as well as across secondary, postsecondary, and work systems to reveal trends and areas for greatest impact. In this brief, intermediaries participating in the Building Equitable Pathways community of practice share metrics they prioritize when determining if and how their pathways work successfully, resulting in more equitable outcomes.



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## About JFF

Jobs for the Future (JFF) drives transformation of the U.S. education and workforce systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. www.jff.org.

## About JFF's Language Choices

JFF is committed to using language that promotes equity and human dignity, rooted in the strengths of the people and communities we serve. We develop our content with the awareness that language can perpetuate privilege but also can educate, empower, and drive positive change to create a more equitable society. We routinely reevaluate our efforts as usage evolves.
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## About Building Equitable Pathways

Building Equitable Pathways is a community of practice with 14 innovative intermediary organizations, JFF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the Walton Family Foundation. Together, we seek to increase our individual and collective capacity to change our education and workforce systems for the better. We will identify best practices, create tools, and develop a theory of action to support the efforts of high-quality intermediaries to transform our systems and also scale and sustain equitable pathways. We aim to drive engagement across these systems, improve their sustainability, and ultimately, influence more equitable student outcomes in academics and careers.

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# Introduction

As the saying goes, many organizations are data rich and information poor.[1] That means that while the collection of various data has exploded exponentially over the last several decades, most organizations have limited power to analyze and harness available data as a key lever to provoke improvement and change. There are many reasons for this situation—lack of staff, lack of expertise or time required for analysis, incompatibility of one data set with another, and confusion about what's available and where to start.

In our last brief, we provided a case study of one of our Building Equitable Pathways (BEP) intermediaries, CityWorks DC, who took on a specific challenge: getting better employment outcomes for DC high school graduates. As the result of a strategic campaign, the city government is now funding the establishment of the Education to Employment Data System to help ascertain those outcomes.

This brief offers a way of discerning what data is needed for equity work. Before looking at data, the intermediaries profiled were asked: what metric or metrics are important if the goal is effecting more equitable outcomes? In other words, one way to master the plethora of data is through a sorting mechanism—in this case a metric. Intermediary organizations from the BEP community of practice identified specific metrics as important to the ways in which they consider the equity implications of their work, with the ultimate goal being that a greater number of Black and Latinx youth and young people experiencing poverty will succeed in college and their future careers.

## Using this Brief

Intermediaries shared the following metrics as ones their organizations find important from an equity perspective—working towards a reality where a person's identity, in a statistical sense, no longer determines how they fare. The metrics and stories they offered are not all encompassing but are meant to provide grounded examples for how to sort and use data to make equity work practical and tactical, including:

- what the metric is
- where the data can be found
- how frequently organizations revisit the data
- how they use the data and how it impacts decision-making and program and policy choices.

We hope the examples provide both actionable next steps for collecting and tracking data in your own location or region, as well as a frame of reference for evaluating how the data you currently collect—or might consider collecting—impacts your ability to advocate for equity-centered change.



# Metrics You Can Track—A Starting Point

Intermediary organizations work across partners to improve components of career pathways that cut across secondary, postsecondary, and work systems. Some build work-based learning (WBL) delivery systems to provide these important experiences for young people. They develop WBL sequences and structures with educational institutions and build partnerships with key employers, employer associations, and sector organizations to identify, aggregate, and broker WBL opportunities at scale. Others serve primarily in a convener role, providing few, if any, direct services but rather facilitating connections to other organizations that serve this function. In that convener role, they are also often focused on changes that can be made at the state or federal level to improve our education-to-work systems.

These lines aren't always clearly drawn, and some organizations perform both functions. But in general, depending on the type of intermediary they are, organizations regularly track and use different metrics to gauge progress towards more equitable outcomes. We've separated those metrics into two types: **programmatic metrics** and **regional metrics**.

**Programmatic metrics** are those centered on the outcomes of a single program, usually a work-based learning or other career pathways program. Data is collected and analyzed in-house at the organization running the program.

**Regional metrics** reflect outcomes across several programs, educational institutions, or school districts within a given geography. They might have a city or metro-area focus or encompass a regional economic development region or entire state. The data is usually collected from multiple sources and multiple organizations. These metrics usually include data about a much larger number of individuals compared to the programmatic metrics.

For all the following metrics, organizations emphasized how important it is to make sure the data can be disaggregated by demographics, both to discern trends and to track progress against programmatic and regional goals.

# Programmatic Metrics

Programmatic metrics are centered on data for one program, usually a work-based learning or other career pathways program. Data is collected and analyzed in-house at the organization running the program during recruitment and onboarding, while the program is ongoing, or through outreach and surveys after young people have left the program. Often, analyses of programmatic metrics result in changes to the program, such as redirecting interventions, resources, and work with partners.

BEP organizations had different levels of disaggregation for the below metrics. The most common demographics were race, ethnicity, and gender. Other demographics they considered included geography (region or school district of origin), proxies for socioeconomic status (such as eligibility for free or reduced-price meals), individuals with disabilities, first- or continuing- generation students, language learner status, homelessness status, migrant status, and foster care status.

When presenting these metrics below, we call out the "phase" for when the data for this metric is collected in the lifecycle of a program. Those phases are:

**Pre-enrollment** **During program** **Post-program completion**

"Right now, we are stepping in to help individuals meet the constraints of the system, but the better we get at doing that, the more we "hide" the need for our systems to change too. Rather we should use the disparities as an opportunity to say "Wow, this is obvious. Let's come together so that we can leverage our collective resources to prevent this from happening in the future." This would require us to each change our respective roles and resources, spending the time to unpack the nuances of whether the identified barriers could be dismantled, the process re-imagined, or the timeline slowed to do the real work." **—CareerWise CO**

# Work-based learning program applications, hires, retention, and completion

**Phase:** During program
**Frequency Revisited:** Annually
**Source:** Organization's internal datasets
**Metric in Action from** CareerWise CO

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"In our first few years, we have seen some disparities by race and gender across our various metrics. We hope to eliminate all disparities over time, particularly as we address systemic barriers. In fact, we already have seen the impact of asking our employers to self-select into our Equity First initiative, [which] helps them rethink their hiring and onboarding practice to address the effects of bias on access to the opportunity, as well as providing resources for supervisors to create more inclusive cultures and processes through an apprenticeship. What's more, emerging evidence shows that those disparities actually disappear when apprentices are retained past the first year, when many of those issues of culture, belonging, and forming a professional identity are more prominent for apprentices."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Everyone uses this data—our school partners, our employer partners, our staff—to ensure we provide adequate and appropriate supplemental supports for individuals, especially as a stop-gap solution amidst deeply and structurally inequitable systems that are weighted against those individuals. Ultimately, we think that employers can be one of the most powerful actors in upending problematic trends and can also bring to bear an outsized influence on systems-level conversations, as we continue to build a growing coalition that can advocate for policy improvements."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This data informs how/where we direct resources and what type of messages we carry back from the program to the ecosystem partners, like schools and employers. It impacts the resources we offer and provide to schools to support students in applying and structuring their related coursework; it impacts employers' understanding of implicit bias and inclusivity in practice; and ultimately, we hope it can be parlayed to into work with higher education institutions who could play a role in filling the gaps around equitable access to coursework necessary in training."

# Wages and benefits eligibility

**Phase:** During and post-program

**Frequency Revisited:** Annually (wages) and every two years (benefits eligibility)

**Source:** Employer and student self-reporting

**Metric in Action from** Say Yes Buffalo

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"Our apprenticeship program is still young, but we are looking at ways in which we can use data to better understand the tipping points at which apprentices move toward and start making a family-sustaining wage. We also want to track the point where they can begin moving from sustaining wages to actual wealth building. The belief is that the individual benefits in combination with the wage levels will shed light on those tipping points, as well as inform possible programmatic offerings related to financial and benefits management."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"This data will give program staff and partners insight into the impact of additional wages on the personal and household incomes of apprentices who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented in quality jobs. It can also be used by employers to understand the uptake and effectiveness of the benefits they offer based on employee classifications (e.g., part-time versus full-time, etc.) and the associated costs."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This data point will provide an entry point into conversations with employers around the calculation/balance between wages, employer benefits, public assistance, and how the triangulation of those three impacts apprentices' families and wealth building opportunities."

"Sharing and communicating this data can be a key in reflecting the impact on not only an apprentice but also the overall regional economy as it helps give power to those previously marginalized and underrepresented, showing the amazing potential." **—Say Yes Buffalo**

# Post-program connectedness (e.g., to college, employment, or a career training program)

**Phase:** Post-program

**Frequency Revisited:** Twice annually

**Source:** Alumni surveys and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data

**Metric in Action from** Urban Alliance

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"We look at connectedness to a postsecondary pathway as a spectrum, understanding that our alumni may experience barriers to connectedness (e.g., basic needs insecurity) that impact their ability to stay connected. Collecting this data has been a challenge. We're seeing a higher-than-average proportion of our alumni not showing up on in the NSC database and/or are unreachable so we cannot confirm their connectedness level. We would like to see higher rates of alumni in sustainable pathways over time, especially two-plus years post-program completion."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"We store these data in Salesforce so they're accessible by all staff and share only aggregate connectedness data to external partners. Program staff have the option to make changes in practice to impact post-program connectedness by providing more information on life post-high school, so students are aware of their options and resources."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"Knowing the number of disconnected students and reasons for disconnection informs the events calendar and staff caseload for the following semester. It helps identify where earlier points of intervention may be needed, as well as the transition process for when our seniors become alumni."

# College access, persistence, and credential outcomes

**Phase:** Post-program

**Frequency Revisited:** Biannually

**Source:** Alumni surveys and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data

**Metric in Action from** Rush Education and Career Hub (REACH)

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"Among participants who enroll in postsecondary education, we see different patterns of persistence and degree or certificate attainment for first-generation students compared to continuing-generation students. We're using that data to inform deeper and more sustained programmatic engagement that will hopefully lead to students experiencing increased labor market success and/or further postsecondary enrollment."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Our REACH students, staff, school, and community partners are all implicated in this metric given how environments shape the experiences and outcomes of first- and continuing-generation students."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric informs decision-making around academic support services, career planning and placement, and outreach/wraparound support targeted to first- and continuing-generation students."

"Understanding college access and persistence for first- and continuing-generation students reinforces the fact that local systems and institutions are not adequately designed to address or sufficiently eliminate long-standing structural barriers for those trying to navigate our STEM/Health education and career sectors today." —Rush Education and Career Hub

# Students in “good jobs” and “promising jobs”

**Phase:** Post-program
**Frequency Revisited:** Biannually
**Source:** Internship program alumni surveys administered by a third-party organization and stored as anonymized data (current) and data-matching from state labor and education departments (aspirational)
**Metric in Action from** YouthForce NOLA

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

“We define “good jobs” as those that pay the regional median wage or higher, include benefits, and have advancement potential. We define “promising jobs” as those that pay a living wage or higher, include benefits, and have the potential to lead to a good job within two years. We assess our work based on the extent to which it leads to good and promising jobs for New Orleans public school students as a whole and for different demographic sub-groups. The YouthForce internship alumni survey data currently provides a snapshot at a point in time, but we are working towards a longitudinal analysis.”

**Who Uses This Data:**

“All of our partners—schools, employers, training providers, government partners, families, and young people—play a role in learning from and acting on this data and how it relates to how our programs operate as part of students’ high school experience.”

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

“YouthForce uses this metric to set goals and to identify elements of the student internship experience that should be scaled and elements that need additional support.”

# Regional Metrics

Regional metrics reflect outcomes across several programs, educational institutions, or school districts within a given geography. They might have a city or metro-area focus or look at trends across an economic development region or entire state. The data is usually collected from multiple sources, multiple organizations, and usually includes data about a much larger number of individuals compared to the programmatic metrics. Analyses of regional metrics can result in programmatic changes or spark conversations to change broader policies.

Disaggregation for these metrics can be more challenging than working with programmatic data. With details driven by federal, state, and local policies and funding sources, these data sets may be incompatible, may use differing definitions, and may cover divergent time periods. They may also require the use of data-sharing agreements, a time-consuming process to negotiate. Often intermediaries find themselves in the position of actively advocating for more granular levels of data to allow more effective equity analyses. But no intermediary can ignore these public data sets: they often influence the views of the general public and policymakers, and they benefit from the critical eye of an intermediary to avoid misperceptions about the strength or weakness of an intervention or even an entire system.

When presenting these metrics below, we call out the "phase" of the education-to-work sequence for when the data is collected, which includes:

**Secondary education** **Postsecondary education** **Work**

These metrics also focus on the transition points in between these phases.

# Enrollments and completions of career connected learning activities and programs

**Phase:** Secondary education
**Frequency Revisited:** Every six months
**Source:** A partnership with the Washington State Education Research and Data Center that was built on data-sharing agreements with state agencies that approve or provide programs offering career-connected learning, allowing for regular reporting
**Metric in Action from** Career Connect Washington

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"Looking at the outcomes and experiential data and information along the lines of demographics tells us if our system and our programs are working, or not, and for whom. It keeps us pointed on our north star goal of equity of outcomes, like access to living- and household-sustaining wage jobs and lets us know if we are getting closer to that goal. It does not, necessarily, diagnose remaining issues (for that, we need to focus directly on qualitative data of student, family, and practitioner experiences), but it overall tells us if what we are doing is making demonstrable difference in the lives of young folks across the state."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Regional leaders and practitioners use this data to understand regional outcomes and trends in accessing and completing locally generated career-connected learning programming. They leverage this data to advocate for funding and support to create or grow new programs, to provide wraparound supports for students furthest from economic justice, and to collectively advocate to the state legislature to fund and support this work."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This data is used to understand the availability of sector-specific pathways and programs and to see which students are enrolling in those pathways at both a regional and statewide level. It allows sector intermediaries to see who is being reached, by demographic, and who is being supported to prepare for, apply to, access, and complete programs. It is also used to inform funding decisions and may be used to determine whether programs should continue to be funded (based on whether they are equitably accessing and serving students based on demographics). We are looking forward to looking at completions of career launch endorsed programs as well as looking at employment outcomes now that we are far enough into this initiative to have that data."

# English language arts achievement, math achievement, and science achievement

**Phase:** Secondary education
**Frequency Revisited:** Annually when the Perkins reports are submitted
**Source:** PSAT standardized testing data entered into the Delaware longitudinal database pupil accounting system
**Metric in Action from the** Delaware Department of Education

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"We have seen a drop in all achievement levels. We hope to see the achievement levels continuously improve over the next few years as the education rebounds from the effects of COVID. We plan to analyze the data to identify inequities across the Programs of Study and among the sub-population groups. Historically, the data has not been disaggregated into sub-population groups as it is a labor-intensive process. Now that we have a full set of data for the 2023 school year, we plan to develop the reports needed for us to identify inequities."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Teachers and administrators have the most leverage to use this data and make changes that will benefit the students' achievement levels in the future. The Career and Technical Education (CTE)/ STEM workgroup has plans to analyze the data to plan professional learning opportunities for teachers to provide them resources needed to help bridge the gap between CTE coursework and academic coursework. Currently, some of the data is provided to local education agencies to be used in the Office of Civil Rights' monitoring process and the needs assessment process for Perkins Funding allocations."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric is used when reviewing program of study content and influences revisions that need [to be] made to programs of study. Historically this data has been under-utilized and has not been used to inform practice and processes. As additional reports are created to aggregate the data, there are plans of utilizing the data in the Program of Study review process that will begin in fall 2023."

# The proportion of students taking dual enrollment courses by race/ethnicity to the proportion of race/ethnicity in the high school student body

**Phase:** Secondary education
**Frequency Revisited:** Regular cadence still to be set (only assessed once)
**Source:** Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) records and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) records
**Metric in Action from** CSCU Student Success Center

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"This metric is important for both community colleges (admissions, recruitment, leadership) and local high schools (dual enrollment administration, guidance) and possibly district school boards, depending on where dual enrollment policy is set."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric isn't being used to make any decisions right now. However, it could be used to inform dual enrollment program outreach and entry processes to eliminate barriers where there are systemic blocks to achieving equitable access to dual enrollment programs."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"This metric isn't being used currently but is with CSCU leadership for consideration to support system initiatives."

# Students graduating high school with associate degrees and other postsecondary credentials

**Phase:** Secondary education

**Frequency Revisited:** Annually

**Source:** Texas Education Agency Texas Academic Performance Reports

**Metric in Action from** Educate Texas

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"Economically disadvantaged students and those who are considering paths outside the traditional four-year college experience have the most to gain from earning a degree or credential in high school, knowing there is a correlation between certificates and degrees and the ability to earn a living wage. Looking at this metric we can ascertain who is accessing and completing these credentials and who is not."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"School districts and associated community colleges and workforce organizations have the greatest power to change factors that affect the metric. The state also uses this data during its process to periodically revisit the approved list of industry-based credentials aligned to well-paid jobs."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"Participation and completion metrics associated with high schoolers earning degrees and credentials impacts curriculum decisions to prepare for offering students access to promising pathways."

"When students earn degrees and credentials as early as high school, they gain an advantage in earning a living wage. The labor market and employers continue to value education in the form of a degree or credential. This strengthens Educate Texas's commitment to building pathways for students to earn credentials with labor market value, whether it be through traditional two- or four-year college access or earn-and-learn opportunities like apprenticeships." **—Educate Texas**

# Remediation rates for students transitioning from high school into community college

**Phase:** Transitions to postsecondary education

**Frequency Revisited:** Annually

**Source:** Illinois Report Card

**Metric in Action from** Education Systems Center

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"This metric consistently reveals the negative impact of remediation on student advancement and success in community college and highlights the need for action to reduce it."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"This data is used by educators and policymakers navigating and shaping state policies related to multiple measures implementation, transitional instruction, and corequisite remediation."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric was used to frame the need for the development of new transitional instruction policies. We also frequently use it to highlight system disconnects (or alignment) in the regions where we work."

# Educational attainment by race and gender (including college-going rates, retention, completions)

**Phase:** Transitions to postsecondary education and postsecondary education

**Frequency Revisited:** Annually

**Source:** Indiana's Commission for Higher Education and the Management Performance Hub

**Metric in Action from** EmployIndy

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"Our data shows that students of color drop out of the education pipeline at a much greater rate, and our goal is to improve advising and transition support to try to level this playing field for students being able to pursue and complete further education."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"This data informs policymakers and advocacy efforts for changes that support more seamless pathways for all of our students. Several policy changes in this year's legislative session included more support for career advising statewide and the expansion of Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program to allow greater access to postsecondary funding for low-income students."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"With partners, it is helpful to know who is currently being left behind and who we need to target for strategic messaging and support. It is a starting point for digging more into targeted populations' needs and who can reach each population."

"We believe [this data] shows us who the system is working for and who it isn't. We don't expect 100% of students to go to postsecondary and graduate, but the achievement gaps are too glaring to not recognize that there are systemic problems." **—EmployIndy**

# Early career outcomes (employment, earnings, etc.) for graduates of our public schools and workforce development programs

**Phase:** Transitions to work

**Frequency Revisited:** The forthcoming DC Education to Employment data system will assess these metrics on a regular basis

**Source:** To date, we have gathered this information via surveys, focus groups, and interviews, but the DC Education to Employment Data System will collect these metrics more comprehensively going forward

**Metric in Action from** CityWorks DC

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"The best available information indicates that the majority of DC's alumni do not complete a postsecondary degree, and that those who stay in the city as young adults earn about half the income of their peers who moved to the city. While the DC government is making significant investments in education and workforce, we need a stronger mechanism to track workforce outcomes of residents served by the education and workforce systems to inform future investments and programming."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Currently, only some schools in DC have the capacity to follow alumni after they graduate from high school or complete postsecondary education. Existing information on income or employment is rare and mostly anecdotal. The Education to Employment data system will provide critical information for our government leaders, residents, employers, and service providers to make data-informed decisions."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"In the future state, DC policymakers can assess the impact of educational opportunities on students' employment outcomes to inform budget and program decisions and employers have data on which workforce programs are producing local skilled talent to develop a local talent pipeline."

# Employment outcomes data across programs

**Phase:** Transitions to work
**Frequency Revisited:** Regularly
**Source:** Individual participant data from partner programs
**Metric in Action from the** United Way of Greater Atlanta

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"We revisit this metric regularly to ensure the various outcomes are being reached equitably across demographics and that metrics are meaningful and a true representation of outcomes. For example, "entered employment" is a typical metric our partners record. However, when we look at outcome data, we need to couple that with either wages or retention data to see how impactful the outcome is. We tend to see that minority participants have better outcomes when they are engaged in training in a high demand area. Retention tends to be impacted by wraparound supports to graduates."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Programs use this data to see the connections between support and better employment outcomes, determining the need for additional feedback, counseling, networking, and financial support that could result in parity of outcomes between students of different demographics."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric is used to better understand how we can best support students in and graduating from the program. This ensures that we allocate the appropriate resources (career counseling, networking tips, wrap around services, etc.) to students and graduates."

"This metric tells us stories about how much we value economic mobility and an individual's ability to reach the next step in their career. Training programs are typically pretty good at getting the student their first job, but ensuring there is additional support to achieve new career milestones makes a larger impact." **—United Way of Greater Atlanta**

# Demographics of workers in occupations that are moderate-high wage and/or offer a promising career path

**Phase:** Work

**Frequency Revisited:** Annually

**Source:** American Community Survey (US Census Bureau) or monthly Current Population Survey (administered jointly by the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics)

**Metric in Action from the** NYU School of Professional Studies

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**Why Prioritize This Data:**

"A primary goal of talent development work in New York City is to ensure that the makeup of "good jobs" reflects the makeup of the city's workforce, which requires an emphasis on creating pathways with a focus on underrepresented populations. Trends along this metric have remained relatively constant over time. We hope to see greater representation of specifically Black and Hispanic native New Yorkers within high-priority occupations."

**Who Uses This Data:**

"Everyone is implicated in this metric. Residents/workers are most impacted. Employers have considerable leverage to make changes in their hiring practices. Educators and workforce training providers can tailor their services to ensure jobseekers are adequately prepared. The city can enact policies that make collaboration between parties easier and reward those who adopt best practices."

**How This Data is Used in Decision-Making:**

"This metric is used to make decisions around which occupations—and which populations—should be the target of talent development work."

# Why These Data

The data we gather impacts the stories we tell ourselves and others about what and whom we value, as well as about the nature of the problems we're solving for. Data—when intentionally and well-used—guides the actions we take as we refine strategy, make mid-course corrections, and set benchmarks and goals. Many BEP intermediaries are at the beginning stages of their data journeys to analyze these metrics and are working towards a point at which they can look at trends over time. Across the metrics, organizations are often:

- emphasizing reaching parity in outcome across demographic groups
- looking to use this data with stakeholders that hold the greatest leverage to make a difference—be it educators, employers, policymakers, or community organizations—without putting undue burden on youth and students
- connecting dots between education and workforce outcomes and the provision of formal education and training, counseling and advising, wraparound supports, employer processes, and policy decisions
- identifying missing data or ways for collecting and accessing more timely and accurate data.

The smarter we get about identifying the equitable goals we are working towards, the better we'll be at identifying, collecting, and using the data that tells us if we're making progress.

> "We hope that this [data] tells the story of how we value the lives of students of color, of Black and Indigenous students, of young women who have traditionally not found a supportive space in registered apprenticeships, of migrant students and bilingual students, and of low-income students and students with disabilities. We hope that it underscores the importance we place on reaching some form of parity, meaning that we are striving toward a future where demographics are not predictive of programmatic engagement nor of access to economically viable jobs and careers."
>
> **—Career Connect Washington**



# Conclusion

None of these metrics alone tells the full story of what young people experience in our educational and workforce systems, and none of them alone point to a sole place to "fix" what's broken and leading to the inequitable outcomes we see, particularly for Black and Latinx youth.

Some of the power in these metrics, however, is in looking beyond standard comparisons of entry and exit points—"program or school enrollments" versus "exits and graduations." **It is particularly important to look deeply into transition points, a student's movement from one level or component of a program to another or in moving from high school to postsecondary education and training to work.** Those are often the metrics that can illuminate the points at which gaps emerge between equity of opportunity and equity of access, between equity of achievement and equity of outcome.

The other power in these metrics is in how they are used and integrated into decision-making. Beginning in 2020, CSCU Success Center developed and included Equity Impact Statements into policy recommendations to the CSCU Board of Regents (BOR). Those statements were designed to help root policy development work in equity and asset-based principles, naming metrics and accountability mechanisms that would inform revisions to the policy to achieve its stated equity goals. For example, the CSCU BOR Alignment and Completion of Math and English (ACME) policy explicitly called for disaggregation of the data by race/ethnicity, gender, age, Pell eligibility, zip code, and first-generation status. It also outlined a process for annually comparing education outcomes to historical data for outcomes before the policy was put in place, as well as to goal outcomes articulated in the policy.

The metrics we choose to focus on and how we integrate them into our decision-making are all a part of the larger stories we tell and the work we prioritize. Intermediary organizations are in a prime position to test the collection of metrics outside of the usual scope of what programs, schools, or employers are funded to or choose to collect and analyze and use them to shine light on the changes we need to make to realize the more equitable future we want to see.

# Appendix: Metrics at a Glance

## Programmatic Metrics

| Key Programmatic Equity Metrics | Source | Phase | Frequency Revisited | Why Organizations Prioritize This Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work-based learning program applications, hires, retention, and completion | Organization's internal datasets |  During program | Annually | **CareerWise CO:** "In our first few years, we have seen some disparities by race and gender across our various metrics. We hope to eliminate all disparities over time, particularly as we address systemic barriers. In fact, we already have seen the impact of asking our employers to self-select into our Equity First initiative, [which] helps them rethink their hiring and onboarding practice to address the effects of bias on access to the opportunity, as well as providing resources for supervisors to create more inclusive cultures and processes through an apprenticeship. What's more, emerging evidence shows that those disparities actually disappear when apprentices are retained past the first year, when many of those issues of culture, belonging, and forming a professional identity are more prominent for apprentices." |
| Wages | Employer and student self-reporting |  During and post-program | Annually | **Say Yes Buffalo:** "Our apprenticeship program is still young, but we are looking at ways in which we can use data to better understand the tipping points at which apprentices move toward and start making a family-sustaining wage. We also want to track the point where they can begin moving from sustaining wages to actual wealth building. The belief is that the individual benefits in combination with the wage levels will shed light on those tipping points, as well as inform possible programmatic offerings related to financial and benefits management." |
| Point of benefits eligibility | Employer and student self-reporting |  During and post-program | Every two years | |
| Post-program connectedness *(e.g., to college, employment, or a career training program)* | Alumni surveys and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data |  Post-program | Twice annually | **Urban Alliance:** "We look at connectedness to a postsecondary pathway as a spectrum, understanding that our alumni may experience barriers to connectedness (e.g., basic needs insecurity) that impact their ability to stay connected. Collecting this data has been a challenge. We're seeing a higher-than-average proportion of our alumni not showing up on in the NSC database and/or are unreachable so we cannot confirm their connectedness level. We would like to see higher rates of alumni in sustainable pathways over time, especially two-plus years post-program completion." |

## Programmatic Metrics

| Key Programmatic Equity Metrics | Source | Phase | Frequency Revisited | Why Organizations Prioritize This Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| College access, persistence, and credential outcomes | Alumni surveys and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data |  Post-program | Biannually | **Rush Education and Career Hub:** "Among participants who enroll in postsecondary education, we see different patterns of persistence and degree or certificate attainment for first-generation students compared to continuing-generation students. We're using that data to inform deeper and more sustained programmatic engagement that will hopefully lead to students experiencing increased labor market success and/or further postsecondary enrollment." |
| Students in "good jobs" *(pays the regional median wage or higher, includes benefits, and has advancement potential)* | Alumni surveys *(current)* and data-matching from state labor and education departments *(aspirational)* |  Post-program | Annually | **YouthForce NOLA:** "We define "good jobs" as those that pay the regional median wage or higher, include benefits, and have advancement potential. We define "promising jobs" as those that pay a living wage or higher, include benefits, and have the potential to lead to a good job within two years. We assess our work based on the extent to which it leads to good and promising jobs for New Orleans public school students as a whole and for different demographic sub-groups. The YouthForce internship alumni survey data currently provides a snapshot at a point in time, but we are working towards a longitudinal analysis." |
| Students in "promising jobs" *(pays a living wage or higher, includes benefits, has the potential to lead to a good job within two years)* | Alumni surveys *(current)* and data-matching from state labor and education departments *(aspirational)* |  Post-program | Annually | |

# Appendix: Metrics at a Glance

## Regional Metrics

| Key Programmatic Equity Metrics | Source | Phase | Frequency Revisited | Why Organizations Prioritize at This Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollments and completions of career connected learning activities and programs | A partnership with the Washington State Education Research and Data Center that led to data sharing agreements with programs offering career-connected learning, allowing for regular reporting | Secondary education | Every six months | **Career Connect Washington:** "Looking at the outcomes and experiential data and information along the lines of demographics tells us if our system and our programs are working, or not, and for whom. It keeps us pointed on our north star goal of equity of outcomes, like access to living- and household-sustaining wage jobs and lets us know if we are getting closer to that goal. It does not, necessarily, diagnose remaining issues (for that, we need to focus directly on qualitative data of student, family, and practitioner experiences), but it overall tells us if what we are doing is making demonstrable difference in the lives of young folks across the state." |
| English language arts achievement, math achievement, and science achievement | PSAT standardized testing data entered into the Delaware longitudinal database pupil accounting system | Secondary education | Annually when the Perkins reports are submitted | **Delaware Department of Education:** "We have seen a drop in all achievement levels. We hope to see the achievement levels continuously improve over the next few years as the education rebounds from the effects of COVID. We plan to analyze the data to identify inequities across the Programs of Study and among the sub-population groups. Historically, the data has not been disaggregated into sub-population groups as it is a labor-intensive process. Now that we have a full set of data for the 2023 school year, we plan to develop the reports needed for us to identify inequities." |
| The proportion of students taking dual enrollment courses by race/ethnicity to the proportion of race/ethnicity in the high school student body | Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) records and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) records | Secondary education | Regular cadence still to be set (only assessed once) | **CSCU Student Success Center:** "This metric is important for both community colleges (admissions, recruitment, leadership) and local high schools (dual enrollment administration, guidance) and possibly district school boards, depending on where dual enrollment policy is set." |

## Regional Metrics

| Key Programmatic Equity Metrics | Source | Phase | Frequency Revisited | Why Organizations Prioritize at This Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students graduating high school with associate degrees and other postsecondary credentials | Texas Education Agency Texas Academic Performance Reports |  Secondary education | Annually | **Educate Texas:** "Economically disadvantaged students and those who are considering paths outside the traditional four-year college experience have the most to gain from earning a degree or credential in high school, knowing there is a correlation between certificates and degrees and the ability to earn a living wage. Looking at this metric we can ascertain who is accessing and completing these credentials and who is not." |
| Remediation rates for students transitioning from high school into community college | Illinois Report Card |  Transitions to postsecondary education | Annually | **Education Systems Center:** "This metric consistently reveals the negative impact of remediation on student advancement and success in community college and highlights the need for action to reduce it." |
| Educational attainment by race and gender (including college going rates, retention, completions) | Indiana's Commission for Higher Education and the Management Performance Hub |  Transitions to postsecondary education and postsecondary education | Annually | **Employ Indy:** "Our data shows that students of color drop out of the education pipeline at a much greater rate, and our goal is to improve advising and transition support to try to level this playing field for students being able to pursue and complete further education." |
| Early career outcomes (employment, earnings, etc.) for graduates of our public schools and workforce development programs | To date, we have gathered this information via surveys, focus groups, and interviews, but the DC Education to Employment Data System will collect these metrics more comprehensively going forward |  Transitions to work | The forthcoming DC Education to Employment data system will assess these metrics on a regular basis | **CityWorks DC:** "The best available information indicates that the majority of DC's alumni do not complete a postsecondary degree, and that those who stay in the city as young adults earn about half the income of their peers who moved to the city. While the DC government is making significant investments in education and workforce, we need a stronger mechanism to track workforce outcomes of residents served by the education and workforce systems to inform future investments and programming." |

## Regional Metrics

| Key Programmatic Equity Metrics | Source | Phase | Frequency Revisited | Why Organizations Prioritize at This Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employment outcomes data across programs | Individual participant data from partner programs |  Transitions to work | Regularly | **United Way of Greater Atlanta:** "We revisit this metric regularly to ensure the various outcomes are being reached equitably across demographics and that metrics are meaningful and a true representation of outcomes. For example, "entered employment" is a typical metric our partners record. However, when we look at outcome data, we need to couple that with either wages or retention data to see how impactful the outcome is. We tend to see that minority participants have better outcomes when they are engaged in training in a high demand area. Retention tends to be impacted by wraparound supports to graduates." |
| Demographics of workers in occupations that are moderate-high wage and/or offer a promising career path | American Community Survey (US Census Bureau) or monthly Current Population Survey (administered jointly by the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics) |  Work | Annually | **NYU School of Professional Studies:** "A primary goal of talent development work in New York City is to ensure that the makeup of "good jobs" reflects the makeup of the city's workforce, which requires an emphasis on creating pathways with a focus on underrepresented populations. Trends along this metric have remained relatively constant over time. We hope to see greater representation of specifically Black and Hispanic native New Yorkers within high-priority occupations." |

# Endnote

1. "Data Rich and Information Poor." Industrial IoT World, accessed June 30, 2023, https://iiot-world.com/industrial-iot/connected-industry/data-rich-and-information-poor/ The phrase data rich and information poor (DRIP) was first used in the 1983 book *In Search of Excellence* to describe organizations rich in data but lacking the processes to produce meaningful information and create a competitive advantage. We now live in a world where IoT is exploding exponentially, and large amounts of data are being collected every single day. Unfortunately, there isn't a clear way to sort through or analyze this data within a reasonable timeframe and this phenomenon made many organizations data rich and information poor.


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