

Working to Learn

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR AMERICA'S
EDUCATION-TO-EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

April 28th
11am EDT



HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL
Managing the Future of Work



HARVARD Kennedy School
MALCOLM WIENER CENTER
for Social Policy

NEWPROFIT

1. Introduction

2. Descriptive Landscape

3. Opportunities and challenges

4. Key Takeaways

About the Project on Workforce

The Project on Workforce is an interdisciplinary, collaborative project between the **Harvard Kennedy School** Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, the **Harvard Business School** Managing the Future of Work Project, and the **Harvard Graduate School of Education**



Our mission

The mission of the Project on Workforce is to **chart the course** for a post-secondary system of the future that creates **more & better pathways** to economic mobility. We **catalyze action** across leaders in business, education and policy to **create smoother connections** between education and good jobs.

Research Team



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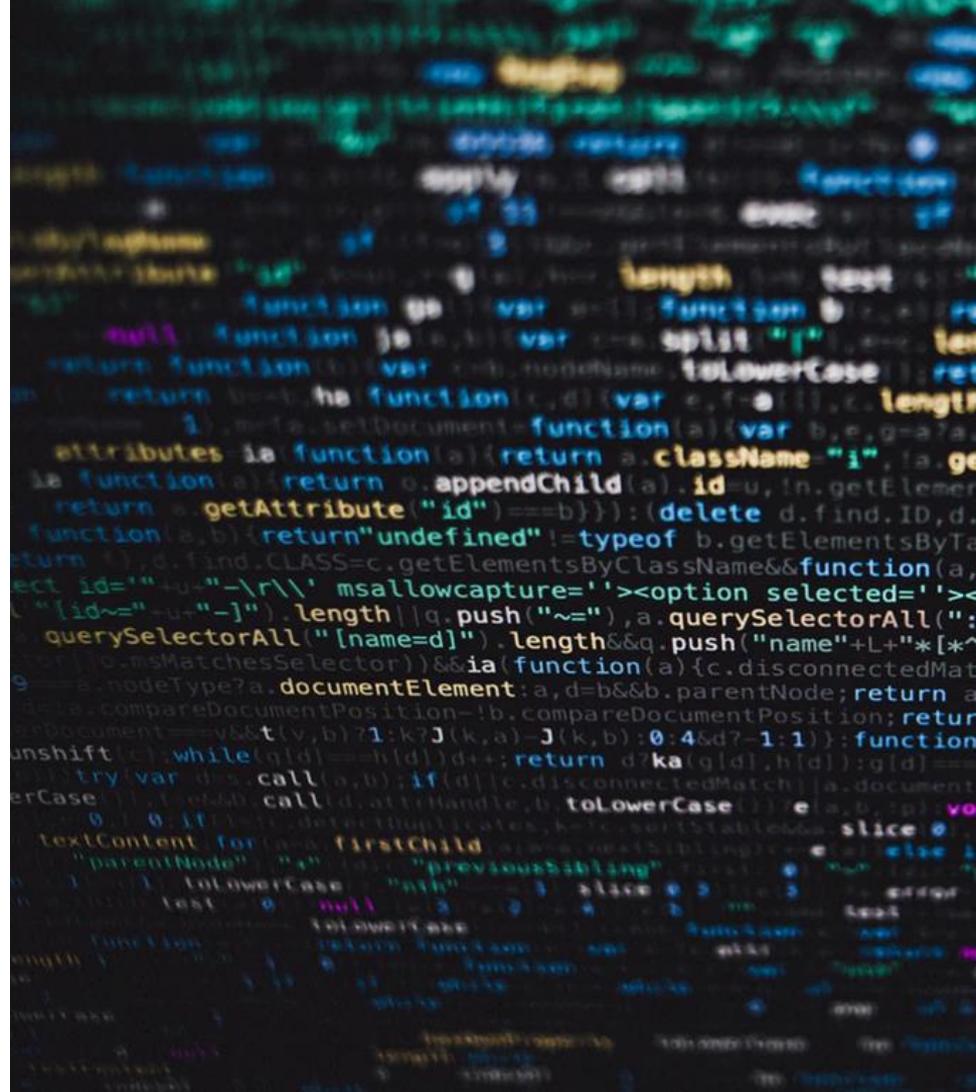


J.B. Schramm

Grove Social Impact Partners

Dataset

- Applicants to the 2019 New Profit's Postsecondary Innovation for Equity (PIE) initiative
 - For innovative organizations that sought to help young individuals access “*postsecondary education and upwardly mobile careers*”
- Open RFP program
- **316** education-and-employment organizations
- Representing over US **\$4.1 billion in revenue**
- Applicant organizations served over **2.6 million US learners** in 2019 alone



Quantitative Methods

- Converted the PIE application data to:
 - continuous variables
 - categorical variables
- Summary statistics for all the variables quantified in numbers
- Correlations to measure the strength of relationships between numerical variables
- Contingency tables with chi-squared tests to measure relationships' strength between two sets of categorical variables
- T-tests to explore the relationship between binary categorical variables and continuous variables
- Multinomial logistic regression to quantify associations between more than two categories and numerical variables

Qualitative Methods

- Analyzed longer-form answers using inductive and deductive coding approaches
- Dual coded
- Inter-Reliability testing
- Blind approach
- Used responses to create a new set of metrics of interest and value for the field that had not been asked directly in the application
- We used “prioritize employer relationships” or “prioritize evidence”
- This is due to the researchers only coding for if these things were explicitly mentioned in a program's application, and thus they prioritize it enough to feel that it is important to highlight

1. Introduction

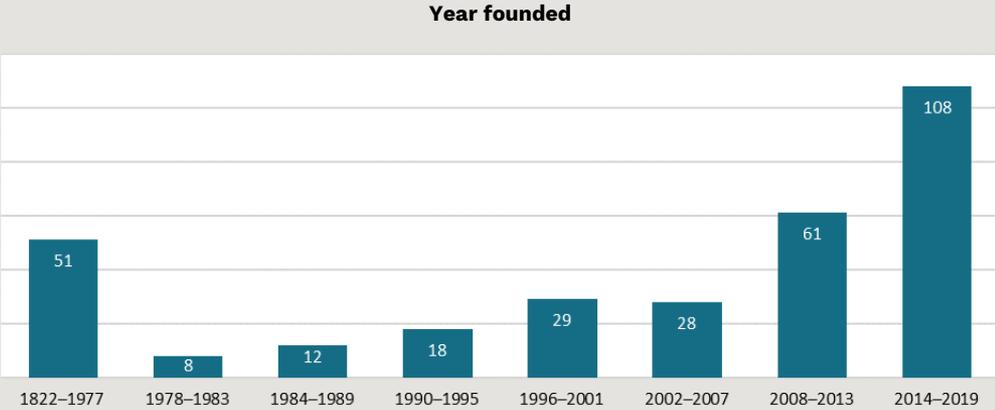
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The PIE field is young

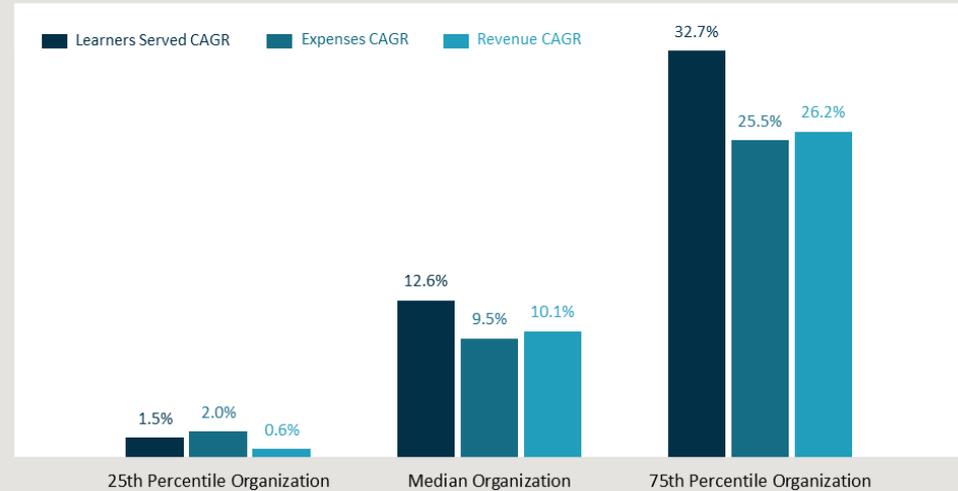
- Median year founded 2009
- ~25% of organizations founded in just the past five years



And the sector is growing

- 31% Average Compound Annual Growth Rate in Learners Served
- 47% of organizations were planning a site expansion in the next year

Organizational growth rates



...yet it is relatively fragmented, with many small organizations

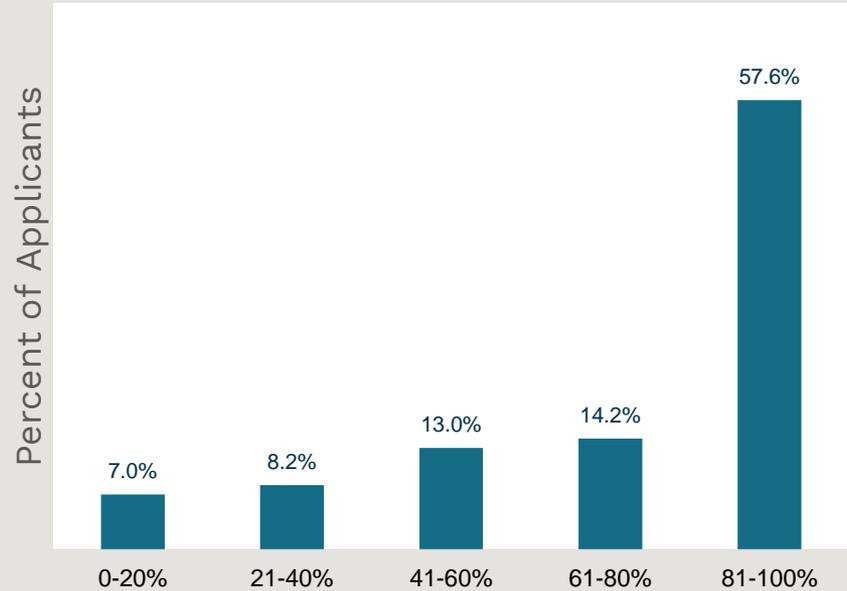
- Median organization served 525 learners in 2019
- Middle 50% range of 135-2,500 learners



Primarily youth-serving...

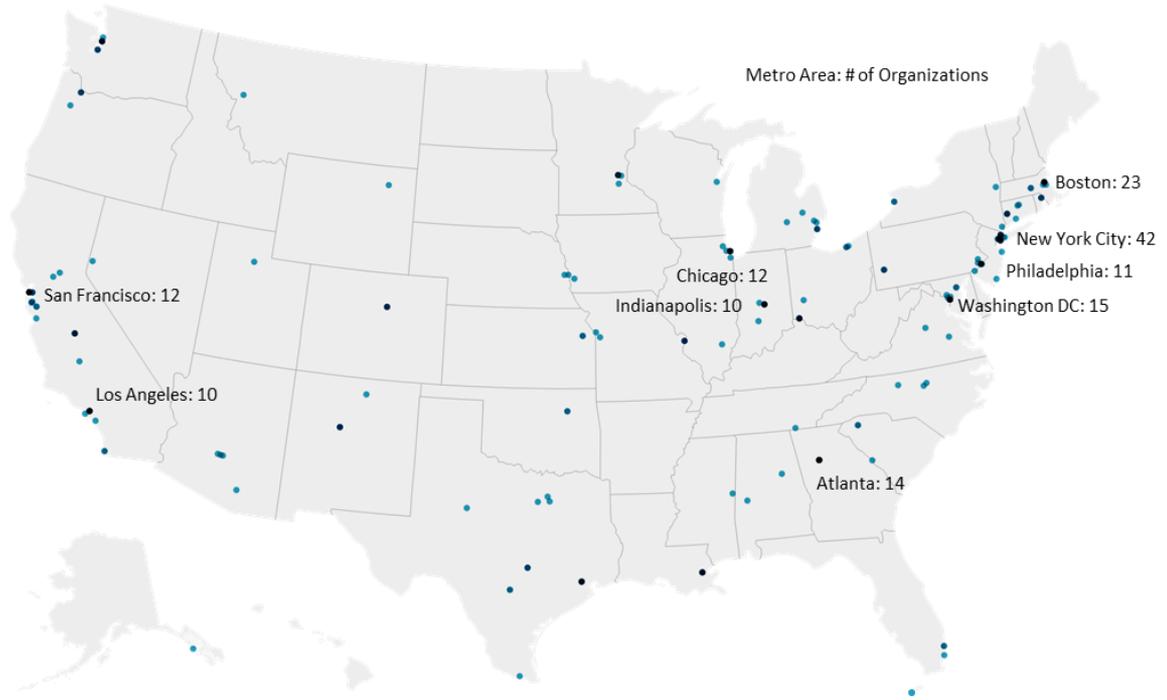
- PIE application called for applicants that serve youth, but many serve youth exclusively

Percent of learners served aged 16-30



Concentration in large metros areas

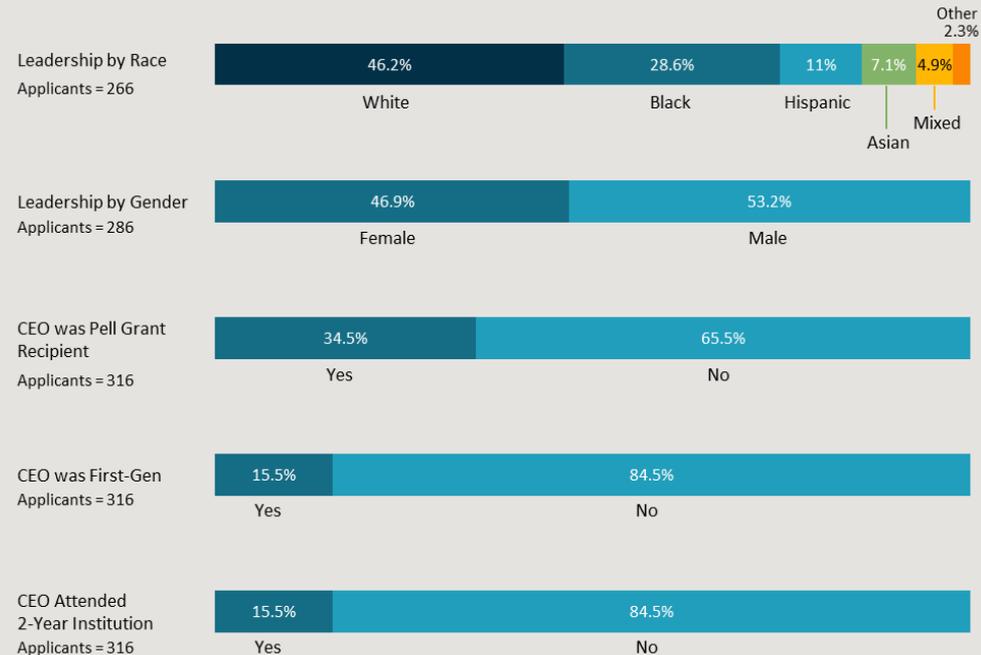
- 82% headquartered in urban centers
- Only 6% headquartered in small towns



Leadership are diverse

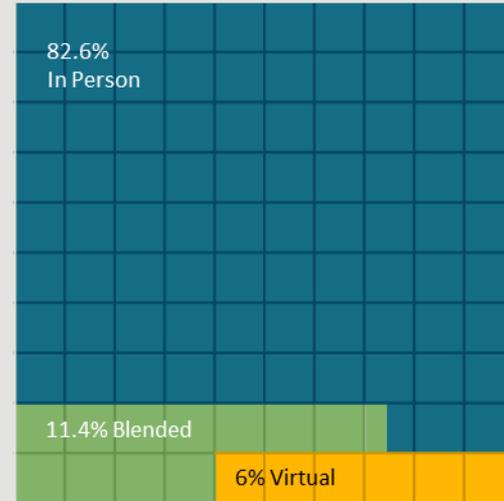
- Significant shares of proximate entrepreneurs
- 42% identify as members/former members of the audience served
- 5% identify as family members/former members of the audience served

Background of Leadership



Pre-COVID, technology under-leveraged in delivery

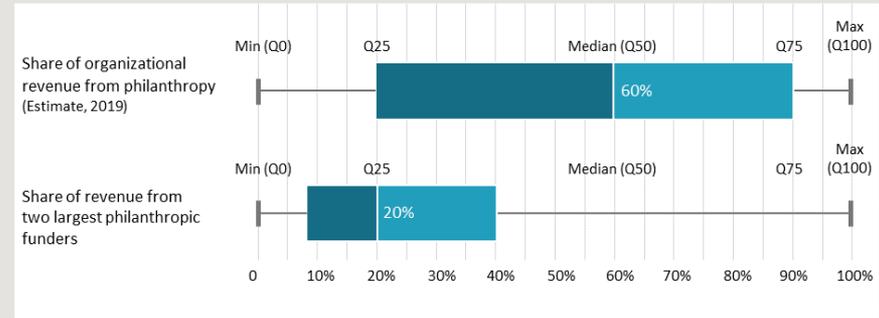
- Applicants heavily weighted towards in-person models
- Lower shares of blended/online for programs that worked with employers and those that employed holistic approaches (e.g., wraparound provision)



**2019 data; pre-pandemic

Philanthropy plays a driving role in the sector

- Private foundations and corporate foundations have the most significant presence
- Low share of public funding (though WIOA may not be fully accounted for)



Types of Philanthropic Funders (Two Largest)

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Four Established Archetypes have a stronghold

- 1 Tech Skill Enthusiasts
- 2 Job Skills Evangelists
- 3 College Degree Advocates
- 4 Work Futurists

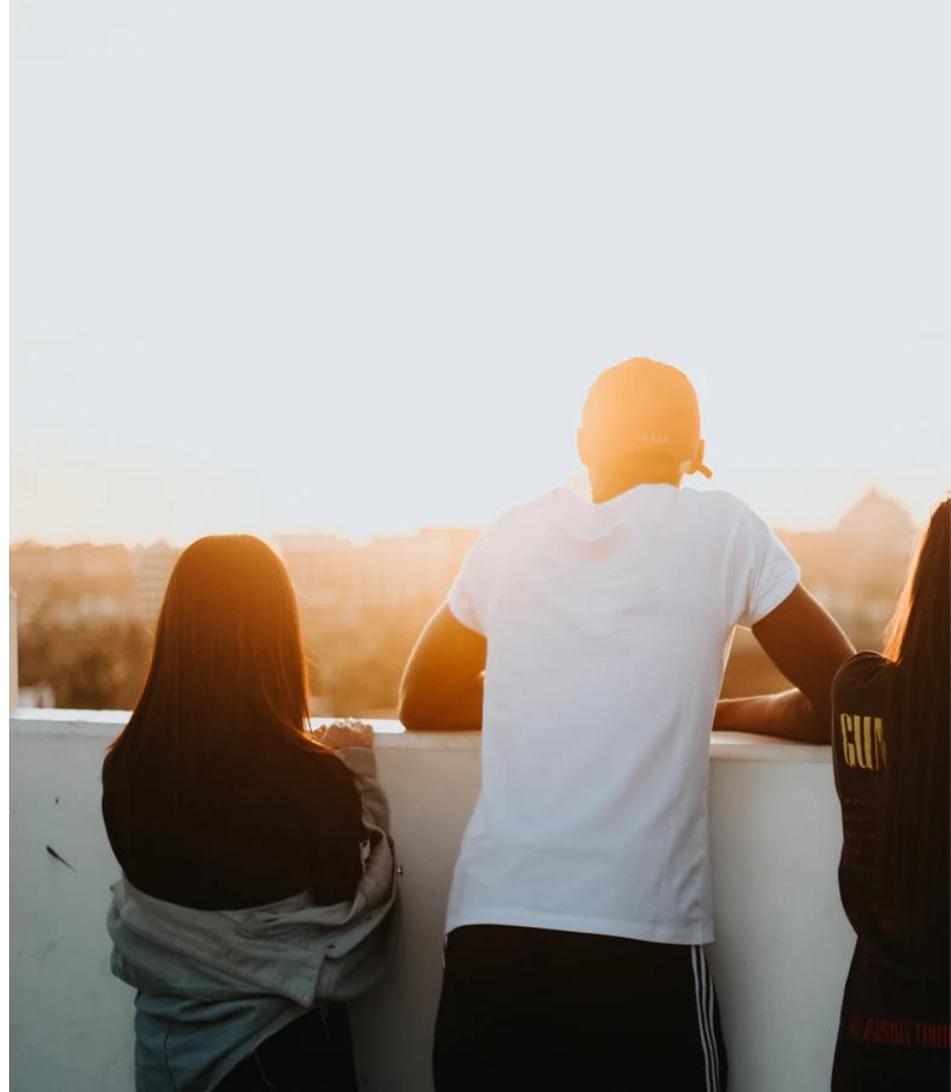
College vs. career divide

- Only **16%** of organizations prioritize relationships with both educational institutions and employers.
- For organizations that focused on college-related outcomes, only **33%** also prioritized employment outcomes
- Strong negative relationship in the data between the applicants who cited educational institutions' involvement and those that directly involved employers.



Huge potential to engage more deeply with employers

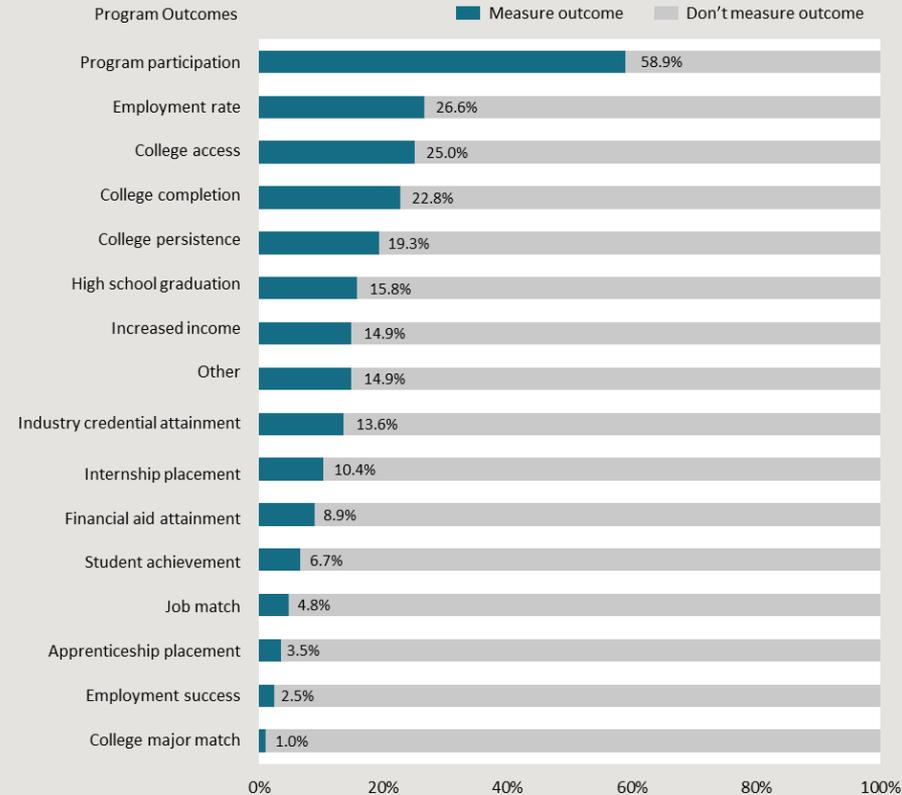
- Only 35% of applicants mentioned working directly with employers
- But programs that worked with employers were growing faster (in learners served)
- Even amongst tech skills-focused programs, only half work with employers



A growing, but still nascent, evidence base:

- Completion of program most commonly-tracked success metric (**59%**)
- **9%** of applicants cited an existing study, quasi-study, or external evaluation of the program model in their application
- **33%** of applicants cited the ability to enhance data collection and evaluation as a motivation for seeking funds

Most Commonly Identified Outcomes of Interest



Foundational skills & the future of work

- **35%** of organizations in the dataset focused on job-specific training
- Just **9%** of organizations prioritized foundational soft skills alongside job-specific skills



Wraparound supports

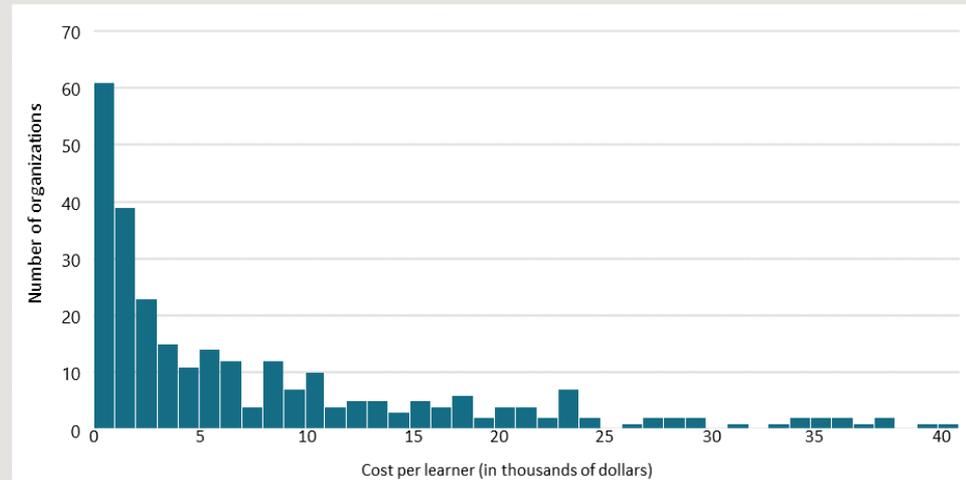
- **13%** of organizations cited directly providing wraparound supports (e.g., subsidies for transportation, childcare, housing, mental health)
- Less common in organizations that work with employers



Resource allocation questions?

- We found no statistically significant relationship between estimates of cost-per-learner and...
 - prioritizing evidence
 - working with employers
 - prioritizing soft & hard skills
 - providing wraparound supports

Distribution of Cost Per Learner Estimates



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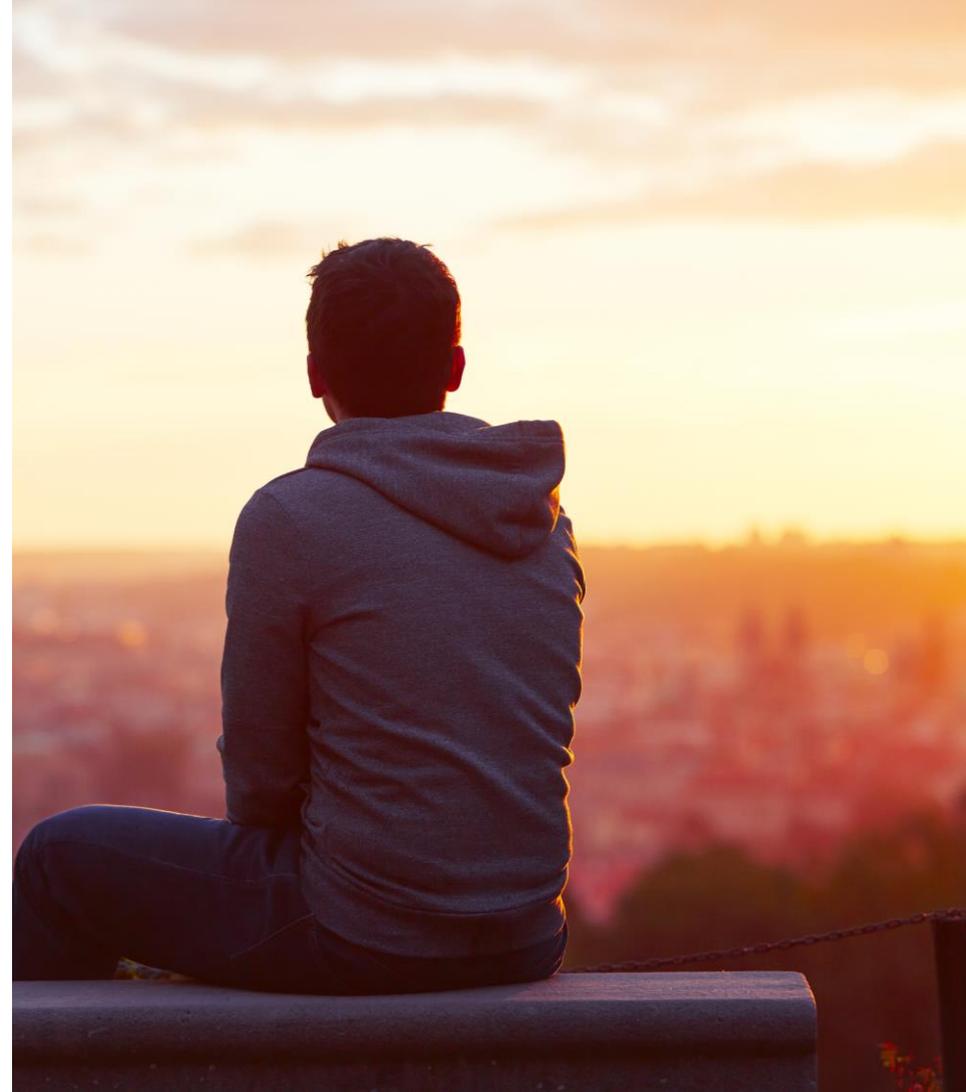
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For Philanthropy

- Fostering collaboration rather than competition for job placement in fragmented field
- Funding opportunities that close college/career divides rather than reinforce
- Investing in employer-led models



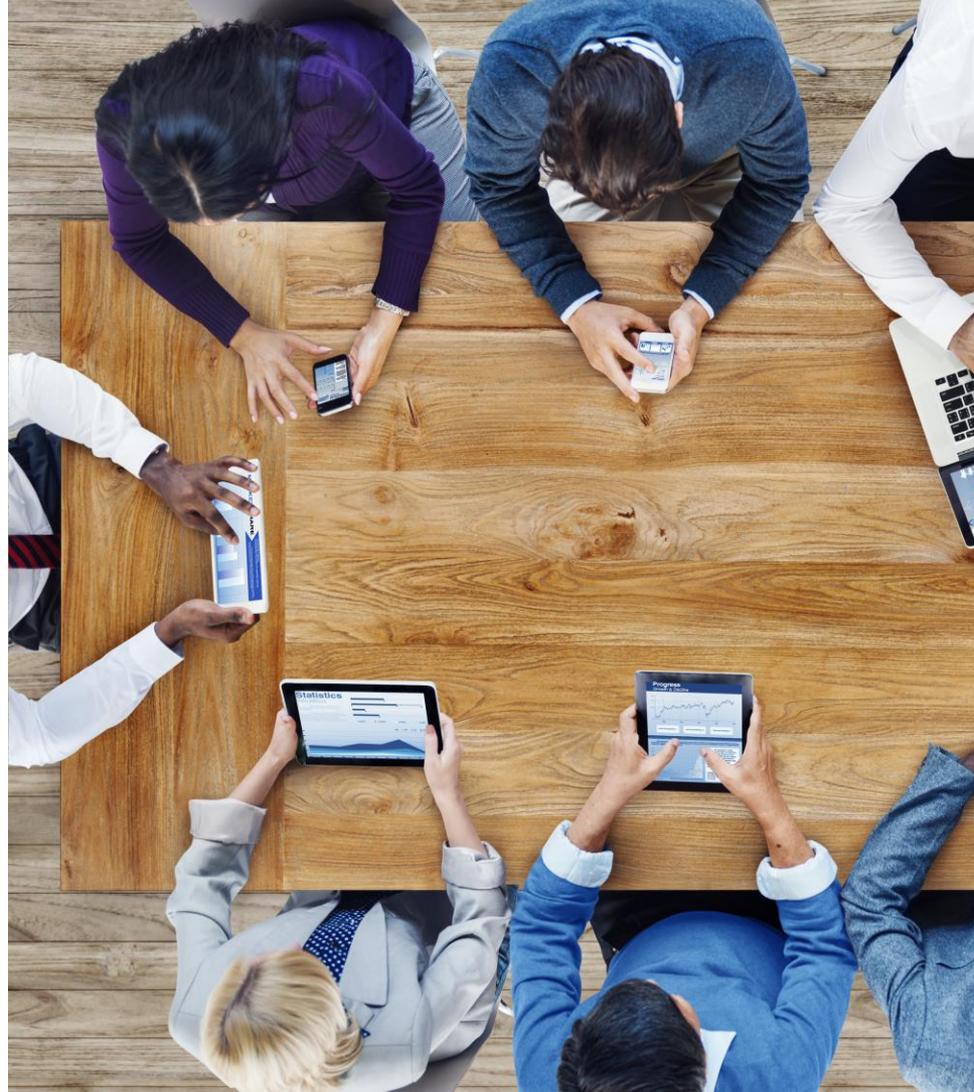
For Policymakers

- Breaking down education/career silos
 - Flexibility in funding
 - Collaboration across agencies
- Making outcomes data more accessible
 - Enables navigation for learners and understanding performance
 - Funding programs with proven success factors
- Economic mobility as the north star



For Practitioners

- Wraparound support provision
 - More intentional integration
- Online and blended learning
 - Improving cost-to-serve
- Employer engagement
 - Scale models
- Foundational + job-specific skills



For Employers

- Compensated work-based learning models
 - Active talent management strategy
- Investing in soft skills for the future of work
- College access for incumbent employees



For Researchers

- Building the landscape of workforce development providers through big data
- *Replicable* frameworks for what works
- Helping to align on definitions on what and how we should measure outcomes



Questions?

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