



SHEEO

State Higher Education
Executive Officers Association

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: Exploring Multi-State and Multi-Sector Data Projects

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Presentations from the convening are available on the [SHEEO Postsecondary Data website](#). The information in this report and accompanying website may be freely used with the appropriate attribution and citation: State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO).

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The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) serves the executives of statewide governing, policy, and coordinating boards of postsecondary education and their staffs. Founded in 1954, SHEEO promotes an environment that values higher education and its role in ensuring the equitable education of all Americans, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic factors. Together with its members, SHEEO aims to achieve this vision by equipping state higher education executive officers and their staffs with the tools to effectively advance the value of higher education, promoting public policies and academic practices that enable all Americans to achieve success in the 21st century, and serving as an advocate for state higher education leadership. For more information, visit sheeo.org.

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INTRODUCTION

State postsecondary education data systems are integral components in many multi-state and multi-sector data initiatives. They often serve as a central point within the broader P20W data ecosystem, helping to foster collaboration and enable informed decision-making across diverse sectors and state boundaries. Since 2010, the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) has conducted periodic studies of the content, structure, and use of state postsecondary data systems through its Strong Foundations survey. Building on the Strong Foundations work, SHEEO launched the Communities of Practice (CoP) project in 2017 to better understand and promote the effective use of state postsecondary data systems through convenings of state teams. These convenings offer agency staff opportunities for information sharing, professional development, and technical assistance. Participating states have the chance to learn from national experts; connect with intrastate and interstate peers; reflect deeply on their data systems' capacities, uses, and barriers; and strategize actionable steps to foster change. Over the project's life, 43 states and the District of Columbia have participated in one or more CoPs. For the first time, the SHEEO agency representing the Northern Mariana Islands, Northern Marianas College, participated in a CoP convening, with staff representatives from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Public School System joining as partners.

The tenth CoP convening, "Exploring Multi-State and Multi-Sector Data Projects," was held February 7-8, 2024, in Alexandria, VA. The two-day meeting included more than 50 representatives from 14 states¹: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Teams included representatives from SHEEO agency research and data, institutional effectiveness, and state longitudinal data system offices and their partners at state K-12 and workforce agencies and two- and four-year postsecondary institutions.

With the growing need to understand student trajectories from education to workforce, the focus of this CoP on cross-sector and cross-state data projects was timely. SHEEO agency staff communicated a need to learn from other states engaged in building multi-sector and multi-state data projects to inform attainment and economic goals through improved collection and use of postsecondary data along with cross-agency data sources. Through presentations and provided resources, CoP attendees were able to learn more about the nuances and impacts of shared data governance and data-sharing agreements, the value of collaboration and idea-sharing across sectors, and effective storytelling to key stakeholders via dynamic data visualizations. Attendees also benefitted from activities where state teams identified and developed cross-sector and cross-state data project goals, including identifying the partners, resources, and strategies associated with those goals. Consequently, attendees left the CoP with an initial action plan for creating change within their agencies and their states.

In this paper, SHEEO shares the presentations, resources, and team activities from the convening. This information can be used by SHEEO agencies to reflect on their current practices, plan and develop effective data policies, and better use of multi-sector and multi-state information to improve postsecondary and workforce outcomes in their states.

1. SHEEO includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and all U.S. territories and freely associated states when using the term "state."

INFORMATION FOR REFLECTION, PLANNING, & ACTION

States have increasingly built data systems that connect student information across various state agencies to develop appropriate policies that support student needs. And, for good reason. Student trajectories through the education-to-workforce pipeline are not uniform or linear; students often attend multiple schools and postsecondary institutions. Students also relocate across state borders for postsecondary education and employment opportunities. Consequently, it becomes challenging to gain a comprehensive understanding of student data when dealing with isolated data systems within and across state borders. Sharing and exchanging data with K-12, workforce, human services agencies, and neighboring states can bridge these gaps, providing a more holistic view of the student experience. In pursuit of this goal, SHEEO invited leading experts to offer insights about building and leveraging data-sharing networks across sectors and state borders. These presenters provided guidance and resources to support agency staff in navigating the challenges and opportunities of data sharing within various cultural, technological, and political contexts. Through CoP sessions and team activities, state participants focused on how these initiatives could support the development of goals and projects that reflect the power of shared data to inform policy and practice.

REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The CoP began with an introductory session aimed at providing attendees with insights from seasoned participants who had previously engaged in CoPs. These experienced individuals shared their knowledge and expertise on getting the most out of such convenings. Among the panelists were **Amanda Klafehn**, Interim Chief Policy and Strategy Officer at the **Tennessee Higher Education Commission**, responsible for overseeing the **Policy, Planning, and Research Bureau**; **Blake Cannon**, Chief Analytics Officer at the **Arkansas Division of Higher Education**; and **Kate Akers**, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Data Officer at **Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)**. The panelists delved into various strategies for sustaining momentum and enthusiasm beyond the conclusion of the convening.

Panelists emphasized the importance of establishing a shared vision and deliberate planning within teams, as well as connecting with other states to share insights and explore collaborations. They advocated for allocating dedicated time before and after the CoP sessions for thorough discussions and planning, specifically noting the value of the resources in the **Team Time Activities²** for setting goals and developing action plans. Panelists noted the rapid pace of CoP activities demands active participation rather than mere observation to maximize the benefits of this collective knowledge sharing. Additionally, forging connections with other states was noted for its role in facilitating peer learning across various stages of initiatives and providing reassurance that no team is alone in their journey.

CREATING CULTURES OF COLLABORATION FOR IMPROVED DATA SHARING

Navigating the data-sharing process from governance and legal frameworks to analyzing and reporting cross-sector data can be daunting. Many state teams identified privacy and security standards as top priorities for technical assistance. Protecting, collecting, and reporting data and information within one agency may require different technology, infrastructure, and governance standards than another. These procedural and cultural differences complicate cross-sector and cross-state data sharing. Ensuring collaborative and robust privacy and security measures that take into account procedural and cultural organizational differences not only better safeguards sensitive information but also fosters trust among stakeholders and promotes responsible data stewardship practices.

2. See pages 12-13 in this document for more information.

Baron Rodriguez, Executive Director of the [Data Integration Support Center \(DISC\)](#) at [WestEd](#), addressed the importance of recognizing that integrating data from different state agencies and organizations means that legal, privacy, and security needs can often change. As an example, he shared that building multi-sector and multi-state data systems with agencies such as social services or justice system offices might necessitate adjustments in the data-sharing approaches of postsecondary agencies. This could involve adhering to agreements tailored to the “specific language” of each agency or integrating unique legal terms pertinent to each agency’s privacy and sharing protocols.

To bridge these differences, Rodriguez recommended focusing on federal and state regulatory structures when working with states that may be at different stages of data system building (e.g., an agency currently building buy-in for the value of data sharing). Focusing on these established legal structures can help data practitioners, legal staff, and other state agency members collaborate more effectively across organizational cultural differences. Rodriguez shared several [DISC resources](#), including the [services DISC offers to state agencies looking to leverage cross-sector data](#) and a [legal framework approach for integrated data systems](#) to help agencies build capacity in training their legal counsel to understand the value and use cases of cross-sector data. DISC also performs in-depth security reviews that ensure data systems are safely designed to support cross-sector data.

SHARING DATA ACROSS STATE SECTORS: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES

Many of the state teams in attendance have some form of data sharing across state agencies already in place. With an increased interest in understanding workforce outcomes and trends from postsecondary education programs, many higher education agencies are sharing data with their state workforce or labor departments. Georgia and Missouri are two states that have established infrastructure and funding to ensure that the data exchanges across state sectors are continuous and of value to the state. Representatives from state data and postsecondary and workforce agencies shared current cross-sector projects and associated lessons learned.

David Tanner, Associate Director of Government Services and Research at the [University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government](#), described the monumental task of creating a four-agency data-sharing agreement with the [University System of Georgia](#), [Georgia Department of Education](#), and the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#). The agencies set out to understand the teacher preparation pipeline from program graduation to employment placement across the state. Tanner described the facilitation of willing partners as a key to the success of this project. Effective collaboration requires that the right people be at the decision-making table, each contributing to and benefiting from the process. Tanner discussed making the business case clear with all stakeholders to ensure that the project’s timeline, goals, and approach all align with the shared vision. Bringing such a complex agreement to fruition, Tanner likened it to the gestation period of an elephant: requiring significant time, patience, nurturing, and careful coordination, with each step contributing to the eventual realization of the final result.

Jeremy Kintzel, P20W Research Director at the [Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development](#), shared that Missouri had been doing cross-sector data projects across state agencies prior to the official establishment of its longitudinal data system. For fiscal year 2024, legislators approved funding to create a P20W research and data center, to legislatively expand and support the cross-sector portfolio that Missouri was already cultivating.

Both Tanner and Kintzel reflected on the importance of establishing foundational trust among agencies and keeping each other accountable for staying on track to meet the project’s shared vision. When building trust and collaboration, Kintzel discussed Missouri’s governance structure, which was set up through a committee to provide a venue for conversation and information sharing. Both speakers agreed that

having lawyers who understand the shared vision and genuinely want to get to "yes" is vital to establishing data-sharing agreements that are beneficial for all agencies. Political stability at the state capitol has also been essential to the success of these cross-sector initiatives, with both Missouri and Georgia governors historically supporting the SHEEO agencies and their data use and sharing efforts. As Tanner and Kintzel wrapped up their discussions, both speakers agreed that having a shared vision and business purpose, regular convenings to share information, and alignment with legal counsel on goals, approaches, or strategies is crucial to working across agencies for change.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development

- [MoScores](#)

University System of Georgia & Carl Vinson Institute of Government

- [Georgia Match](#)
- [State SLDS GA-Awards](#)
- [George Data Analytics Center](#)
- [Data Sharing Agreement](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTEROPERABILITY: CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Ensuring states have the appropriate infrastructure to sustain cross-sector data partnerships is essential. The **P-20W+ Community of Innovation** initiative addresses the need for unified state data systems that can securely manage data from early childhood to the workforce. Coordinated by the **Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)** and **Applied Enterprise Management Corporation (AEM)**, the community is enabling a core group of states to develop cost-effective and efficient P20W+ systems that can withstand modernization efforts. The Community of Innovation creates **tools, technical resources, and guidelines** to help scale operations, align market efforts, and share innovative experiences across state organizations to modernize P20W+ data pipelines.

Tricia Farris, Senior Assistant Director at AEM, led an engaging session explaining how the Community of Innovation provides a scalable, ready-to-use solution for states, agencies, and data advocates. The Capability Model helps organizations navigate their data stewardship journey and pinpoint needed skills for managing data governance, improving data quality, conducting analysis, ensuring privacy and security, and enhancing data literacy. The Reference Architecture serves as a standardized blueprint to ensure consistency, interoperability, and scalability across various systems and organizations. It focuses on establishing a shared, scalable solution to modernize data management across states and organizations involved in the education-to-workforce pipeline.

During the session, Farris asked teams to assess their existing readiness with the Capability Model, with several states noting their efforts remain in the data collection stage. Farris also facilitated discussions on aligning state agency readiness with key principles such as data privacy, interoperability, and technology independence, emphasizing how the Reference Architecture can support these efforts in multi-sector data collaborations.

DATA SHARING VIA THE PSEO TO UNDERSTAND EDUCATION-TO-WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

The **Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO)** is a data product of the **U.S. Census Bureau** in partnership with state higher education agencies and university systems, state departments of education, and state labor market agencies. The PSEO provides data tabulations of wage earnings and employment outcomes for graduates of postsecondary institutions by degree level, major, institution, and state. Currently, 27 states report data to the PSEO, and among them, 14 states have more than 50 percent of their graduate data accounted for in the PSEO data. **Andrew Foote**, Principal Economist at the U.S. Census Bureau, shared the PSEO Explorer tool which offers a dashboard visualization of the matched data from postsecondary institutions to the national database on employment data including employer and employee demographics. The PSEO shows a powerful narrative that can be illustrated when federal, state, and local data are linked to demonstrate the value of higher education in the workforce. Through the **PSEO Explorer**, the Census Bureau provides students, parents, institutions, and state agencies with improved insight into the market value of degrees and postsecondary return-on-investment (ROI) information. As the PSEO continues to expand state participation, its role in facilitating data-informed discussions on higher education outcomes remains pivotal.

Complementing the PSEO project, the **PSEO Coalition** is a collaborative group of higher education professionals participating in the PSEO who share a vision of demonstrating the economic and non-economic value of higher education through linkages of federal, state, and local data. **David Troutman**, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation at the **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)**, shared his experiences as the inaugural member of the PSEO project and leader of the PSEO Coalition. He began by describing how the THECB entered the PSEO partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau in 2016 to merge student data in Texas with national unemployment insurance (UI) earnings data. Troutman discussed the coalition's mission to improve data literacy and data narratives to effectively communicate with different stakeholders. The PSEO Coalition aims to have 45 state members by 2030 and increase representation among current members.

Jason Pontius, Associate Chief Academic Officer for the **Iowa Board of Regents**, a participating PSEO state agency, reviewed the dashboards they have developed to visualize PSEO data in the Iowa context. Iowa's dashboards include **wage and outcomes** and **recent alumni career outcomes information** that can be disaggregated by industry, geography, postsecondary institution, and degree program. These dashboards help dispel misunderstandings or false narratives regarding programs that may not be graduating students and provide greater context for career service professionals to adapt their advice to students, incorporating data-informed approaches to assist students in navigating career paths. These data and dashboards also broaden the initial understanding of where students are going after graduation. There are geographic and demographic variations to the data that go beyond assumptions about student outcomes and provide needed nuance to conversations related to success goals. This nuance is why the PSEO aims to improve its outcomes data through greater disaggregation by race, ethnicity, and gender.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [University System of Georgia \(USG\)](#)
- [USG – Your Future Earnings](#)
- [USG – Employment Outcomes Tools Matrix³](#)

3. Since the University System of Georgia (USG) could not participate on this panel, David Troutman, who works with staff at USG on the PSEO project, shared USG resources they are using to advance participation and insights from the PSEO.

EVALUATING ENROLLMENT TO EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS: INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

States are grappling with student enrollment-to-employment questions that their current data infrastructure cannot always answer. Post-graduation student mobility across state borders can result in state agencies having an incomplete narrative of postsecondary outcomes and employment trends. To help mitigate these incomplete narratives, the [Coleridge Initiative](#) works with government agencies to enhance state and regional data sharing and support multi-state policymaking and decision-making through the [Administrative Data Research Facility \(ADRF\)](#) and data training. The ADRF is a secure, FedRAMP-certified, cloud-based platform that allows for the safe sharing and collaboration of state longitudinal data, including sensitive confidential microdata. Participation in the ADRF is customizable to the state or agency's needs and operates under the [Five Safes Framework](#) that ensures the platform is secure for users, data, and projects.

Nathan Barrett, Vice President of Product and Development at the Coleridge Initiative, shared how agencies looking to expand their data capabilities across state lines can benefit from participation. States participating in the Coleridge Initiative develop a state-driven data infrastructure that provides tangible impact and informs policy. Three conditions inform the development of the data infrastructure: the platform, the training, and the products. Along with providing a safe cloud-based environment in the ADRF, the Coleridge Initiative's [Applied Data Analytics](#) programs provide training to agency staff on how to use the data, including open-source coding principles, data preparation, and data analytics. The products developed through participation improve the use of the agency's data infrastructure and enhance the communication of impactful data insights that can be shared broadly.

Robert McGough, Chief Data Officer of the [Arkansas Data Office \(ARData\)](#), shared that ARData was charged by its state legislature with developing a longitudinal data system aimed at understanding Arkansas's education to workforce outcomes. The agency first learned about the ADRF platform at a 2019 CoP focused on [aligning postsecondary education and the workforce](#). The ARData team participated in several Coleridge ADRF training courses to leverage best practices and develop secure data infrastructures to address workforce outcomes. Through continued participation, Arkansas was able to work with the Coleridge Initiative to develop several trainings such as the [Evaluating Enrollment to Employment Outcomes \(E2E\)](#) program, designed to facilitate research and evaluation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and services linked to employment and wage outcomes. Arkansas plans to continue to develop training opportunities that expand into prison education, K-12, and the value-data framework.

THE MULTI-STATE DATA COLLABORATIVES: SHARING DATA, IDEAS, AND INNOVATION ACROSS STATE BORDERS

Another opportunity for state participation in a program that fosters data collaboration and idea sharing is the [Multi-State Data Collaboratives \(MSDC\)](#) facilitated by the [National Association of State Workforce Agencies \(NASWA\)](#). The MSDC, through the Coleridge ADRF, allows states to leverage timely administrative data to respond to local market needs, improve programs and services, and address geographic and demographic disparities. MSDCs operate regionally, allowing states to tackle shared questions. **Yvette Chocolaad**, Senior Policy Advisor at NASWA, moderated a discussion between **Adam Leonard**, Chief Analytics Officer and Director of Information, Innovation, and Insight at the [Texas Workforce Commission \(TWC\)](#), and **Tod Massa**, Director of Policy Analytics and the [Virginia Longitudinal Data System \(VLDS\)](#) at the [State Council of Higher Education for Virginia \(SCHEV\)](#). Leonard and Massa have served on the MSDC's executive board since its inception.

The trio discussed the purpose of the MSDC as an entity fostering state-driven development of innovative data ideas and products. Chocolaad provided current examples of MSDC data projects, including the [Unemployment-to-Reemployment Dashboard](#) and the [Multi-State Postsecondary Report](#). Leonard and

Massa underscored the flexibility of state participation in the MSDCs, noting that the structure of the regional collaboratives allows state agencies to participate at any stage of their shared data journey, from idea generation to product implementation. Leonard emphasized the importance of the MSDCs as a dedicated space for conversation and collaboration, noting he found thought partners that were all interested in addressing workforce development issues. Massa highlighted how the MSDCs have facilitated a deeper understanding of the diverse pathways students take to attain credentials and employment, emphasizing the absence of a singular route and the necessity for states to consider cross-border mobility in assessing employment outcomes. Collaborating with other states in regional projects like the MSDC proves valuable, leveraging migration patterns and regional commonalities to address common questions and employment trends effectively.

SHARING DATA ACROSS STATE BORDERS: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES

Sharing data across state borders presents unique challenges, necessitating effective strategies to ensure success and foster collaboration. Examples of the value of multi-state data projects were shared in this session, which included representatives from Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. The session was moderated by **Shannon Gilkey**, the **Rhode Island Commissioner on Postsecondary Education**. All three state representatives discussed the need to have cross-state data to better understand how people move around the region. **Scott Gaul**, Chief Data Officer at the **Office of Policy and Management in Connecticut**, leads the **Data and Policy Analytics (DAPA)** unit, which oversees the state's SLDS (**P20 WIN**). He pointed out that government agencies are set up in silos, so there is not much cross-pollination happening organically. For example, the **Connecticut Office of Higher Education** administers state financial aid programs and can track the amount of aid awarded to students by institution, but the agency is not able to discern if those students receive the aid or graduated because those data are stored in a separate data system held by institutions. **Dana Brandt**, Executive Director of the **Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System**, likened data flows and student movement to the flow of traffic on highways, noting that in Rhode Island people not only drive into Connecticut and Massachusetts but are often employed and/or live in these states post-graduation. People, and their data, move freely across state borders which means that state agencies interested in tracking education and employment outcomes also need to establish collaborative exchanges with neighboring states to build a shared data capacity highway. **Chad May**, Director of Data and Analysis at the **New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education**, shared similar circumstances in his state. He noted that his office produced an employment outcomes dashboard and found that nearly 20 percent of residents were working out of state. However, there is currently no additional employment data available for these people. New Jersey has found collaboration opportunities, like sharing code and crafting research questions with research partners in neighboring states, invaluable for helping them fill in the blanks of their **degree trends** and employment outcomes data.

Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island participate in NASWA's MSDCs, like Texas and Virginia. The three states are members of the Eastern States Longitudinal Data Collaborative. The Collaborative has afforded New Jersey and Rhode Island data visualizations that provide valuable input on workforce outcomes for specific groups like student teachers. Connecticut is participating in training through the Coleridge Initiative to understand career pathways.

When asked to share advice with other states looking to take advantage of multi-state data projects, May suggested that states should start with small steps and set short- and long-term goals. New Jersey set out to track students who leave the state, and after four years of collaborative efforts across multiple states, while they have made progress, New Jersey is still trying to accomplish this long-term goal. Brandt reminded attendees that it takes time to see any real impact of this cross-state work. Brandt and her team continually update dashboards because they lead to effective policy changes in Rhode Island, even though the actual impact on residents may take time to become evident. Finally, Gaul emphasized that attending events like the CoP provides a network of colleagues to learn from and collaborate with.

USING DATA VISUALIZATIONS AND STORYTELLING TO ILLUSTRATE MULTISTATE AND MULTI-SECTOR DATA-SHARING IMPACTS

As states begin exploring the value of multistate and multi-sector data through collaborative data projects, they should also consider how to best communicate their findings and develop a holistic narrative of the state's education and workforce outcomes. The last session of the CoP was focused on visualizing the story that collaborative data sharing can tell. **Vladimir Bassis**, Administrative Consultant for the Community College Management Information System (CC MIS) at the **Iowa Department of Education**, showcased data visualizations for the state longitudinal data system that includes all agencies. Bassis shared visualizations on the **Iowa Student Outcomes** website that show **industry credential trends**, **health occupation data**, and **non-credit** and **credit** program outcomes to track students during and after enrollment. These dashboards and other data visualizations were made possible through data-sharing agreements that Iowa established with various agencies across time including the Iowa Department of Education (2010), the Department of Corrections (2020), and the Department of Transportation (2022). Bassis echoed similar challenges in linking cross-sector data concerning the requirements of data-sharing agreements and relied on a framework developed in Washington for expanding MIS data connections.

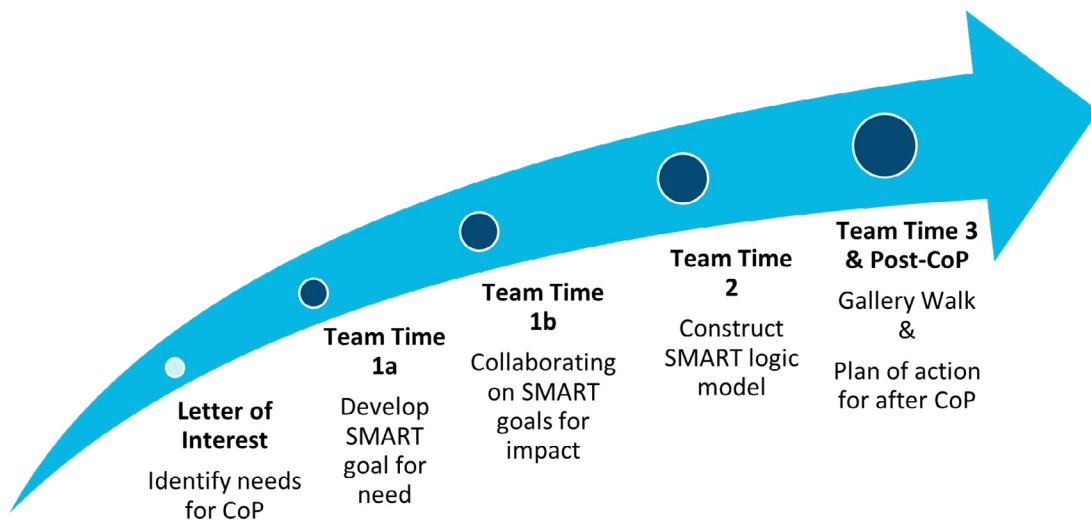
In Kentucky, the **Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)**, has linked data from 27 agencies and 47 data sources for the past 10 years to provide state policymakers and researchers with critical statistics to help support better policymaking. **Matt Berry**, Executive Director of KYSTATS, shared with attendees the visualizations and data tools available to ensure policymakers, practitioners, and the public are informed. When it comes to storytelling in Kentucky, KYSTATS visualizations are built in Tableau and offer robust information across sectors. Berry highlighted the **Multi-State Postsecondary Report**, the **2022 Life Outcomes** dashboard, the **Kentucky Teacher Workforce Pipeline** dashboard, and the **High School Feedback Report**. The High School Feedback Report communicates postsecondary enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes for students. This report shows data in various formats, including bar charts and heat maps, to show the variation across the state over time and is targeted to specific stakeholder groups.

Bassis and Berry recommended that states looking to develop visualizations that offer a better understanding of education and workforce trends should consider their audience. Both speakers agreed that receiving feedback from stakeholders is essential as well as being proactive in their engagement in the development of data visualizations. Berry offered an example of creating visualizations that can be easily interpreted in various formats, such as bar charts. Providing data visualizations to the public also comes with its challenges, like telling a story of a state policy or trend that may not be well received. Bassis emphasized that exploring differences among demographic groups helps in addressing and highlighting issues or trends to support policymaking. It is important to present unbiased data that neither favors nor opposes particular policies. Berry shared similar thoughts, stating that sharing data and being transparent should be viewed as a public service. It is his job to analyze and share data in transparent, clear, and consumable forms.

STATE TEAM TIME ACTIVITIES

State data leaders, tasked with balancing a wide range of responsibilities within their agencies, often find it challenging to carve out time for meetings and collaboration. To address this, SHEEO facilitated **team time activities** at the CoP providing attendees with dedicated space and time to collaborate with team members on multi-state or multi-sector data projects. These activities allowed participants to reflect on what they learned, incorporate new insights, and develop actionable plans to apply their knowledge post-convening. The design of team time activities at the CoP was scaffolded. Before the convening, each state team received materials and resources to identify a specific need to enhance their multi-state or multi-sector data systems. During the convening, teams set a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goal to address this need, created a logic model to strategize post-CoP actions, and showcased their SMART logic models in a gallery walk with other teams. Below is detailed information on the specific team time activities and resources designed for state leaders to strategically plan improvements to their data system policies and practices.

FIGURE 1
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE TEAM TIME ACTIVITIES: PLAN OF EVENTS



TEAM TIME 1: GOAL SETTING

In multi-state and multi-sector data projects, shared goals and visions are crucial for aligning efforts and fostering effective collaboration among diverse partners. The complexity of these data projects requires a strategic approach to establish objectives, ensuring clear targets are defined, responsibilities are assigned, and focus is maintained. To support teams in navigating these complexities, SHEEO facilitated teams through the development of a SMART goal during *Team Time 1*. Using the tools provided in the **Team Time Resource** document, teams created a SMART goal tailored to their unique needs and context, identified necessary collaborators, and outlined the goal’s intended impact. By the session’s end, several teams shared their SMART goals with the larger group, showcasing varied projects aimed at distinct student groups, industries, and credentials.

TEAM TIME 2: DEVELOPING A MULTI-SYSTEM/MULTI-SECTOR LOGIC MODEL

Developing and sustaining multi-state and multi-sector data projects requires strategic planning and collaboration. The successful implementation of a collaborative strategic plan includes identifying partners and purpose, developing a roadmap, implementing the plan to achieve goals, and ensuring the intended outcomes are met through evaluation. During *Team Time 2*, teams applied the SMART goals formulated in *Team Time 1* to create a SMART logic model. Using the documents, worksheets, and examples provided in the [Team Time Resource](#) document, teams systematically connected their resources and proposed activities to the outcomes they aimed to achieve. Teams demonstrated active engagement as they spent the initial part of the session drafting key components of the logic model for their specific data project and concluded by transferring their drafts to a large poster for display during a gallery walk.

TEAM TIME 3: GALLERY WALK AND SHARE-OUT

SHEEO facilitated the final team session as a gallery walk activity. To begin, teams finalized their logic model posters and displayed them around the room. Throughout the activity, teams engaged with each other's work by walking around and using Post-it notes provided by SHEEO to inquire, learn, and suggest collaborative opportunities for multi-state and multi-sector data projects. Teams were asked to consider the alignment of their SMART goals with the initial needs they identified, explore how cross-state and cross-sector discussions informed or altered their SMART goals and logic models, and discuss how they will hold each other accountable for the implementation of these goals after the convening.

The activity concluded with several teams presenting their SMART logic models. These presentations covered a broad spectrum of initiatives aimed at enhancing infrastructural, personnel, and student outcomes. Some teams detailed a process to implement umbrella memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to enhance state infrastructure and data capabilities, while others discussed the development of public interactive dashboards that display employment outcomes and value. The gallery walk provided teams with valuable insights into the initiatives from other states, highlighting opportunities for improvement and advancement within their context.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing the non-linear nature of student trajectories, policymakers are turning to multi-state and multi-sector data-informed approaches to support decision-making. However, the connection of data beyond agency and system siloes remains an ongoing challenge. The exchange of cross-sector and cross-state data offers a promising solution to address these gaps. To fully realize the potential of data sharing, it is imperative to establish trusted, robust, and aligned infrastructures. The presentations and resources from this CoP underscore the importance of trusted partnerships and collaborative efforts in leveraging data across state sectors and borders. By harnessing the insights gleaned from these discussions and activities, states can forge ahead in their endeavors to harness the transformative power of data for the benefit of students and their state stakeholders.