

Minnesota

Analyzing the learner continuum in Minnesota.



Minnesota has many of the foundational elements of strong education to workforce pathways, including a cross-agency P-20 Education Partnership, a portfolio of college acceleration options, a focus on engaging employers in skills retraining/credentialing and apprenticeship programs, and a strong longitudinal data infrastructure. However, many of the state's policies and implementation efforts remain siloed or inconsistent across agencies and systems. To continue to strengthen its efforts, Minnesota can consider how to better align statewide policies and coordination across systems, align and strengthen metrics related to quality and learner outcomes, and leverage data-driven decision making to ensure all learners are supported in their pathway.

STRENGTHS

- Minnesota offers a variety of college acceleration options and provides funding to remove tuition and/or exam costs for learners.
- Minnesota's engagement of employers across several programs, including the Dual-Training Grants, Job Training Incentives, Job Skills Partnership, and Youth Skills Training initiatives.
- Minnesota's longitudinal data systems allow the state to understand learner outcomes and inform policy and program decisions by connecting student data across preK-12, postsecondary and workforce development.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Conduct a formal return on investment analysis of K-12 and postsecondary CTE program offerings for alignment, quality, equitable access and outcomes.
- Target career and technical education (CTE) funding on programs aligned with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations, as well as funds for demonstration of learner outcomes.
- Empower the P-20 Education Partnership to develop shared policy priorities, implementation strategies, definitions and metrics that can ensure much needed coordination and alignment.



LEARNER PATHWAYS

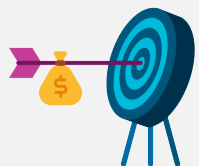
Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.

| K-12 | SUB-ASSOCIATE | ASSOCIATE | BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER | WORKFORCE |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS | | | | |
| TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING | | | | |
| RETRUN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS | | | | |
| STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES | | | | |



HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS

Align all CTE programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations that reflect the state's economic and workforce priorities. Ensure that these programs feature the academic and technical skills and knowledge learners will need to be successful.



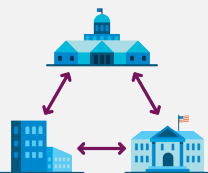
TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING

Dedicate state funding for CTE programs—but only if they are aligned to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations. Target specific funds for pathway completion and demonstrated learner outcomes.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

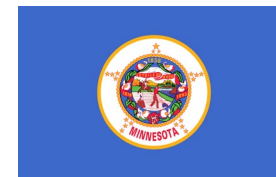
Conduct a biennial return on investment (ROI) analysis of CTE programs to assess whether all learners have access to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways. Collect school- and student-level data to evaluate outcomes of CTE programs against established shared metrics for quality and equity.



STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES

Establish shared priorities and collective accountability across state agencies and education systems for learner pathway development, supports and success. Ensure that business and industry have a seat at the table and can lead discussions related to demand and training requirements.





KEY POLICY

High-Quality CTE Programs



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation could be identified that governs the quality and alignment of K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations.

Minnesota's CTE offerings are developed by each local school/district, postsecondary institution, and/or consortium. K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs must meet approval requirements established through administrative rule (K-12) or MN State policy (postsecondary). CTE programs are driven by definitions and quality measures outlined in the state's Perkins plan. The state's Perkins V local application process requires each consortium to identify at least 6 "state-recognized programs of study" that span K-12 and postsecondary and meet certain requirements, including meeting 2 out of 3 criteria relating to credentials (skills), occupational wages, or in-demand occupations—but the thresholds for credentials and demand are relatively low. Further, it's unclear whether these disparate approval/review processes and plans use consistent quality expectations and criteria; whether programs lose their state approval if they fail to meet established indicators of program quality; or how the state collects data on CTE quality components and/or measures to verify that they are present in the CTE offerings.

While these rules, policies, plans and processes are interconnected, they do not set consistently rigorous expectations, definitions, criteria/thresholds and outcomes that can be used to determine the quality and alignment of each CTE program.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The state can consider codifying more rigorous definitions, criteria and specific thresholds to determine the alignment of each K-12 and postsecondary CTE program with high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations. This could include requiring approved CTE programs to meet rigorous demand and wage criteria to ensure that each program helps students and workers climb the economic ladder to middle-class careers and above. The state can also consider conducting a biennial return on investment analysis to (1) ensure that the programs of study align with state workforce and economic demands and projections in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations; (2) determine where there are program gaps/opportunities; and (3) ascertain program quality.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Career and Technical Education Programs](#)
- Tennessee – [Career and Technical Education Programs](#)
- Texas – [Program of Study Initiative](#)

RESOURCES

- [Minnesota Combined State Plan](#)
- [MDE CTE Frameworks](#)
- [MN State-Recognized Program of Study Guidance](#)
- [MSCC System Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 120B.021.4\(h\)](#) Academic Standards
- [MAR 3505.1100](#) Standards for Program Approval (K-12)
- [MAR 3505.2500](#) Instructional Program Approval (K-12)
- [MN State Policy 3.36.1](#) Academic Programs





KEY POLICY

Targeted CTE Program Funding



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation that governs targeted CTE program funding could be identified.

Currently, state funding for K-12 CTE (CTE aid) is contingent on a district's use of the CTE levy, resulting in a shared state/local investment. State CTE aid is awarded based on certain CTE expenditures (staff, equipment, supplies, travel, etc.) regardless of the alignment, quality, or learner outcomes of the offerings. Districts that opt to not use the CTE levy do not receive state CTE aid—but may support CTE with local and/or federal (Perkins V) funds.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can consider targeted K-12 and postsecondary funding for CTE programs to incentivize the development and implementation of high-quality, aligned programs of study. This could include allocating state funds based on learner participation in and completion of programs aligned with H3 occupations or providing funds to start up, expand and sustain high-quality, aligned programs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Funding Methodology](#)
- Ohio – [Innovative Workforce Incentive Program](#)
- Texas – [House Bill 3](#)

RESOURCES

N/A

POLICIES

- [MSA 124D.4531](#) Career and Technical Revenue





KEY POLICY

Return on Investment Analysis



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No formal legislation could be identified that governs equitable access to high-quality CTE programs of study that reflect high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations.

The state is focused on equity in terms of access to CTE programs and other opportunities as outlined in its combined WIOA/Perkins state plan. The combined plan indicates that CTE programs of study are reviewed biannually (K-12 by MDE and postsecondary by Minnesota State) as part of the local application process. Additionally, the state has processes for K-12 and postsecondary CTE program approval/review (see High-Quality CTE Programs, above).

However, current policies and processes seem to focus more on inputs (stakeholder engagement, educator licensure, equipment, etc.) than on measures of program quality and learner outcomes (student achievement, postsecondary attainment, wages, employment, etc.). Further, it's unclear whether these disparate approval/review processes and plans use consistent quality expectations and criteria; what happens if a program fails to meet established indicators of program quality; how the state collects data on CTE quality components and/or measures to verify that they are present in the CTE offerings; and whether the results/findings of these disparate processes are publicly accessible for students, families, employers, and other community stakeholders.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The state can consider codifying a biennial Return on Investment Analysis to ensure K-12 and postsecondary CTE offerings meet identified quality criteria (that include rigorous wage, demand, and skill thresholds), address economic priorities, and result in intended outcomes for all learners—beyond the scope of Perkins V requirements. This analysis could also include an examination of gaps in student access, success and outcomes in high-quality CTE programs. The findings can be shared publicly and used to identify high-quality CTE programs and practices; inform students/families of the quality of available opportunities; identify misalignment in CTE offerings, quality, access and outcomes; and retire offerings that lead to low-skill, low-demand, or low-wage jobs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Mississippi – [Comprehensive CTE Reform Act](#)
 - Colorado – [Return on Investment Reports](#)
 - Florida – [Executive Order 19-31](#) and [House Bill 7071](#)
- (NOTE: While promising, both Colorado and Florida could be strengthened by more focused analyses on equity and quality of offerings.)

RESOURCES

- [Minnesota Combined State Plan](#)
- [MN State-Recognized Program of Study Guidance](#)
- [MSCC System Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs](#)

POLICIES

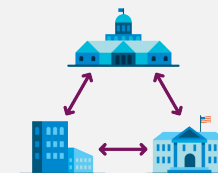
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KEY POLICY

State Cross-Agency Shared Priorities



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

In 2009 the P-20 Education Partnership was codified to “create a seamless system of education that maximizes achievements of all students, from early childhood through elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education.” The legislation requires participation from the commissioner of education, the chancellor of Minnesota State, the president of the University of Minnesota and 4 legislators. Additional members are included based on a vote of the Partnership. Notably, the Office of Higher Education (OHE), the Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the Dept. of Labor and Industry (DLI) are not legislatively required to participate, though they are currently on the membership list along with K-12- and postsecondary-focused associations and advocacy/community organizations—and a single entity representing business/industry (MN Business Partnership).

The Partnership has recently done extensive reflection and planning around the state’s attainment goal and is currently focused on 4 priorities: (1) data use and capacity; (2) financial aid & literacy; (3) credentials of value; and (4) dual credit. Annual reports provide a snapshot of priorities and action steps; however, information about the progress and outcomes of each year’s action plan could not be found.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can build on and elevate the work of the P-20 education partnership by: (1) establishing permanent resources/staff to support the cross-agency work; (2) reviewing and updating the membership to ensure all relevant agencies and partners are included; (3) codifying clear expectations for the partnership’s work—including requiring partner agencies to demonstrate how agency policies, strategies and resource allocation decisions are aligned to support the partnership’s goals; and (4) requiring the partnership, and each member agency individually, to publicly report progress toward shared accountability measures that support learner success across the state’s education to workforce pathways and systems.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education \(DACCTE\)](#)
- Indiana – [Governor’s Workforce Cabinet](#)

RESOURCES

- [P-20 Education Partnership Reports](#)

POLICIES

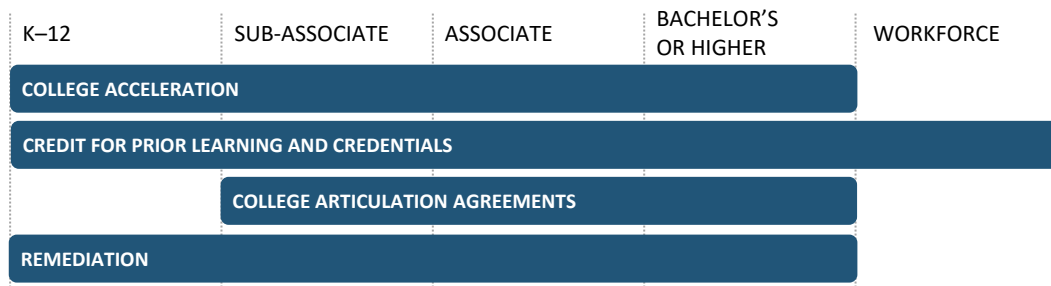
- [MSA 127A.70](#) P-20 Education Partnership
- [MSA 135A.012](#) Higher Education Attainment Goal
- [MSA 116L.665](#) Workforce Development Board





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.



TRANSCRIPT



COLLEGE ACCELERATION

Provide and incentivize a range of options for learners to earn college credit while in high school. Ensure that all learners have access and financial support to accelerate their journey to a postsecondary credential.



CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS

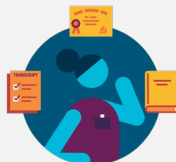
Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.

TRANSCRIPT



COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

Establish statewide articulation agreements to ensure college credits earned in K-12 or at one institution transfer and count toward a degree at another. Minimize or eliminate credit loss and misalignment for transitioning learners.



REMEDICATION

Replace outdated developmental and remedial education with college credit bearing options paired with intensive supports. Adopt co-requisite remediation programs or offer remediation to learners before they graduate high school.





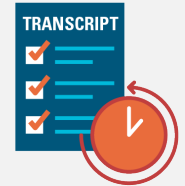
POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

College Acceleration



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Minnesota offers several college acceleration opportunities for students. The state allocates roughly \$4.5 million each year to subsidize Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam fees for low-income students and to reimburse teachers for professional development. The state requires institutions in the MN State system to accept AP scores of 3+ or IB scores of 4+ for college credit, and “encourages” the University of Minnesota and private postsecondary institutions adopt equivalent policies. There is a similar law for acceptance of College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits.

Minnesota also offers two dual credit programs that remove nearly all tuition and fees for students. Concurrent enrollment (a college course taught by a high school teacher at the high school) generates state funding for the school district if the course meets NACEP accreditation requirements (or equivalents), or if it is a technical course offered by an MN state institution. The state allocates \$4 million per year for concurrent enrollment. The Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program (a college course taught by college faculty at the college/online) generates state funding for the postsecondary institution. Most PSEO courses are only open to 11th and 12th graders; however, students may take a CTE PSEO course in 10th grade. Some of the state’s Youth Skills Training programs also include dual credit opportunities.

Students may also earn articulated credit for CTE courses in certain postsecondary institutions, depending on the course. Finally, the state funds \$1.5 million per year for a P-TECH school in Rochester that offers IT and nursing pathways through partnerships with include IBM, the Mayo Clinic, and Rochester Community and Technical College.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can build on this foundation to increase overall participation and equitable access to college acceleration opportunities. The state can consider requiring high schools to offer a diverse portfolio of college acceleration options and providing incentives focused on student performance and equitable success, as well as expanding available college acceleration options to emphasize related career pathways and industry-valued credentials that count for college credit. The state can also establish a combination of policy incentives/requirements to address existing barriers that may create disincentives to offering/promoting some college acceleration opportunities (e.g., some districts may hesitate to promote PSEO options because postsecondary institutions receive the state funding).

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [High School Acceleration Programs](#) and [Statewide Agreements on Credit](#)
- Idaho – [Advanced Opportunities Funding](#)
- Louisiana – [TOPS-Tech Early Start Program](#)
- North Carolina – [Automatic Enrollment](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN Dept. of Education, Career and College Success](#)
- [MN Dept. of Education, Legislative Reports](#)
- [MN Office of Higher Education, Earn College Credit in High School](#)
- [CTE Credit MN](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 120B.13](#) AP and IB Programs
- [MSA 120B.131](#) CLEP
- [MSA. 124D.09](#) Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act
- [MSA 124D.091](#) Concurrent Enrollment Aid
- [MSA 136A.91](#) Concurrent Enrollment Grants





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

MN State Policy 3.35 governs the awarding of credit for learning experiences outside postsecondary credit-bearing courses and “assessed by academically sound and rigorous methods and processes.” The policy addresses external assessments for credit, such as AP, IB, CLEP, industry-recognized credentials, registered apprenticeships, etc., as well as internal assessment for credit by postsecondary faculty. Additionally, the state requires MN State Colleges and Universities, and encourages the University of Minnesota, to award college credit to veterans for courses that meet the American Council on Education expectations, or equivalent.

A consistent policy for the University of Minnesota on credit for prior learning experience could not be found. Institutions may grant credit for prior learning experience based upon student request and completion of a prior learning assessment that is conducted by the academic department in which credit is sought. The institutional policies warn that the credit for experience may not be accepted at other postsecondary institutions upon transfer. There are also limitations on the number of credits that will be accepted.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota could prioritize data collection and reporting to better understand the effectiveness of current credit for prior learning policies and practices. This data should include student outcomes (retention, completion, etc.), as well as how institutions define and award credit for prior learning. Finally, the state should evaluate how these policies are communicated to prospective students to create greater awareness of the opportunity to earn credit for prior learning and ensure that credit is transferrable across the state’s postsecondary institutions and systems.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Prior Learning Assessment Credit Policy](#)
- Kentucky – [Prior Learning Initiative](#)
- Ohio – [Military Strategic Implementation Team](#)

RESOURCES

N/A

POLICIES

- [MN State Policy 3.35](#) Credit for Prior Learning





KEY POLICY

College Articulation Agreements



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No policies governing statewide articulation agreements for transfer between public higher education systems could be found. However, the state has enacted policies to reduce the loss of credit during transfer. The University of Minnesota and the MN State systems are required to maintain course equivalency guides and a common course numbering system—both are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. MNtransfer.org provides transfer information to students, parents and school counselors, including a listing of articulation agreements between individual institutions (not statewide or system-wide), and information about the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum framework for lower-division general education requirements (these can also vary across institutions).

For transfer of college credits earned in high school, MN State is required to accept credit for courses taken as part of a postsecondary enrollment option (PSEO) when the student enrolls in the MN State institution. The law further requires reciprocity between MN State institutions for PSEO credits upon recognition by one institution.

Technical program courses do not usually transfer to baccalaureate programs. High school students in technical programs may be able to earn articulated credit at Minnesota State institutions. The Governor’s Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with Minnesota State, must establish a mechanism to transfer credit from youth apprenticeship programs to applied associate degree programs.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

A recent legislative report from the University of Minnesota and MN State highlights transfer policy successes but also indicates the need to continue evaluating and managing transfers to meet student needs and support program integrity. However, the report doesn’t identify specific action steps or barriers to be addressed. Nor does the report offer any data that would allow policymakers to independently evaluate the success of the state’s transfer efforts. The state can consider strengthening the transfer policy and implementation reporting and evaluation requirements to address these issues.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements](#)
- Indiana – [Core Transfer Library](#)
- Kentucky – [Transfer Articulation Agreements](#)

RESOURCES

- [Articulated Credit CTECreditMN.com](#)
- [Postsecondary Planning: A Joint Report to the MN Legislature \(2021\)](#)
- [Minnesota Transfer](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 135A.08](#) Credit Transfer
- [MSA 135A.101](#) Postsecondary Enrollment Options
- [MSA 124D.09](#) Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act
- [MSA 124D.50](#) Service-Learning and Work-Based Learning Curriculum and Programs





POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Remediation



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Minnesota law states that students who meet college and career readiness benchmarks (high school ACT/SAT and/or state assessment scores) are not required to take remedial (developmental) courses. State law also requires the Office of Higher Education to annually report on developmental education identification, enrollment, attainment, program completion, and other measures that can be disaggregated by postsecondary institution, high school/district and student group(s).

However, most of the state’s remediation policies and implementation strategies are developed at the MN State system and institutional level. In 2017 the legislature required the MN State system to develop a plan to reduce the number of students placed into developmental education. MN State institutions have responded through a variety of methods, including: co-requisite models or paired courses or supplemental supports, creating multiple math sequences for students pursuing different degree pathways, and establishing bridge or pre-college programs to increase college readiness, among others. These individual efforts have not yet translated into a statewide approach.

MN State system policy 3.3 also requires each institution to establish a standing committee and develop an institutional placement policy that includes multiple measures to determine placement in remedial coursework. Such measures include course placement instruments (ACCUPLACER), nationally-normed college entrance exams (SAT/ACT), high school GPA, high school class rank, high school grades in specific courses, etc. MN State indicated it would have all components of its plan in implementation across its institutions by 2020-21. The MN State system has seen improvements in students completing developmental courses, with persistent opportunity gaps still existing.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The MN State system has seen improvements in students completing developmental courses, but persistent gaps still exist for underrepresented student groups. The system has a unique opportunity to compare the policies and strategies implemented across institutions to determine whether some practices provide better outcomes for students. This could include collecting data related to longer-term outcomes, such as postsecondary degree completion, employment and wages. This could help determine whether particular placement measures, remediation models and/or learner supports are more predictive of college success.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – [Complete College Georgia](#)
- North Carolina – [Multiple Measures of Placement Policy](#)
- Tennessee – [Co-Requisite Remediation](#) and [Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support \(SAILS\)](#)

RESOURCES

- [Developmental Education Plan Report to the Legislature](#)
- [Getting Prepared: Developmental Education Course-Taking of High School Graduates](#)
- [Getting Prepared, MN Office of Higher Education](#)
- [Getting Prepared Appendix B: Developmental Education Enrollment](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 136A.055](#) Developmental Education Reporting
- [MSA 136F.302](#) Regulating the Assignment of Students to Remedial Courses
- [MN State Policy 3.3](#) Course Placement
- [MN State Procedure 3.3.1](#) Course Placement





POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.

K-12

| SUB-ASSOCIATE | ASSOCIATE | BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER | WORKFORCE |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS | | | |
| LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID | | | |
| OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING | | | |
| STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS | | | |



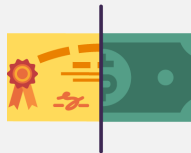
REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS

Establish a statewide policy to allow students to earn an associate degree while continuing to work toward a bachelor's degree. Ensure two-year and four-year college credits can be combined toward the credential.



LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID

Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).



OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING

Transition postsecondary funding models from those based on learner enrollment to ones based on learner outcomes. Dedicate more funding to programs and institutions that show demonstrated success in meeting success metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings.



STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS

Define and promote a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect articulated pathways to advanced learning and employment. Ensure that postsecondary credential programs are widely accessible to all learners and reflect value in the labor market.



POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Reverse Transfer Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Minnesota State system will regularly provide lists of potential reverse transfer students to each college and university for review and award of associate of arts degree through reverse transfer (Procedure 3.21.1). Eligible students must have completed the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (general education requirements), completed at least 12 credits at a community college, transferred to a university, completed at least 60 college-level credits, and provide consent for transcript and coursework information to be shared between the community college and Minnesota State.

A similar systemwide policy at the University of Minnesota could not be found. Several institutions did not reference reverse transfer at all, while one institution referenced reverse transfer with a specific community and technical college but did not provide any additional information. According to recent report, since 2013, 3,124 associate degrees have been awarded through reverse transfer in the state across both state university systems.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can consider analyzing reverse transfer data eligibility, participation, and outcomes data to determine the impact and effectiveness of current policies across learner groups. The state can also examine how the reverse transfer opportunities are communicated to students, whether students are aware of these opportunities, and whether the student opt-in to consent to share educational records is a barrier to reverse transfer completion. Finally, while the MN State system audit of reverse transfer students seems promising, a similar effort appears to be missing from the University of Minnesota upon student exit from the system without a credential. The state could consider adopting consistent statewide policies and procedures to ensure learners can benefit from reverse transfer policies across public university systems.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Reverse Transfer Process](#)
- Florida – [Reverse Transfer Statewide Articulation Agreements](#)
- Texas – [Reverse Transfer Process](#)

RESOURCES

- [Postsecondary Planning: A Joint Report to the MN Legislature, MN State and Univ. of MN, February 2021](#)

POLICIES

- [MN State Procedure 3.21.1](#) Transfer of Undergraduate Courses, Credit, Associate Degrees and the MN Transfer Curriculum





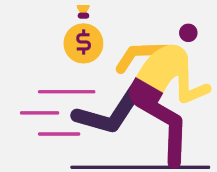
POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Last Dollar/Last Mile Financial Aid



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No ongoing state-level last dollar scholarship/grants or last mile financial aid policies or funding could be identified.

Historically, the MN Reconnect Program provided funding to assist students between the ages of 25 and 62, who had earned a minimum of 15 credits in a credential program and had not enrolled the prior two years in a participating higher education institution. The program was targeted to students with a family adjusted gross income of \$85,000 or less. Funding for the program (roughly \$1 M per year) ended June 30, 2021.

While neither a last dollar nor last mile policy, the Workforce Development Scholarship provides up to \$7,500 (over three years) to “incentivize students...to enter high-demand occupations upon graduation” from programs in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, information technology, early childhood education, transportation or a program tied to a local workforce shortage area. This policy also incentivizes postsecondary institutions to “leverage private matching funds from local businesses, resulting in additional scholarships.”

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota set a postsecondary attainment goal of 70 percent for Minnesota adults aged 25 to 44 by 2025. Currently, the state does not meet this threshold for any demographic group. A last dollar or last mile financial aid program could help the state increase postsecondary completion towards the attainment goal.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [Last Mile College Completion Program](#)
- Rhode Island – [Rhode Island Promise](#)
- Tennessee – [Tennessee Promise](#) and [Tennessee Reconnect](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN Office of Higher Education, MN Measures, Educational Attainment](#)
- [Workforce Development Scholarship Program](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 135A.012](#) Higher Education Attainment Goal
- [MSA 136A.123](#) MN Reconnect Program
- [MSA 136F.38](#) Workforce Development Scholarships





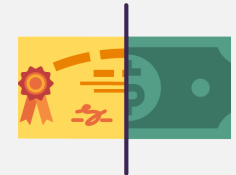
POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Outcomes-Based Funding



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No outcomes-based funding policies or appropriations could be identified for the FY 2020 and 2021 biennium.

The state has included performance metrics in its higher education appropriations in the past, holding back amounts that ranged from 1-5% of total appropriations toward performance-based measures. Prior metrics for MN State institutions focused on increasing degrees, related-employment rate, reallocation of costs to direct mission and student programs, reduction in remediation enrollment and increase in credit loads. Prior University of Minnesota performance funding metrics included increases in undergraduate completion rates for students of color, increases in STEM degrees, increases in the 4-year graduation rate, reallocation of administrative costs to benefit direct mission and student programs, and increase in licensing disclosures.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can consider codifying and continuously funding postsecondary education systems and institutions based on performance (e.g., completion/credential attainment) and outcomes (including employment and wage earnings). This funding system can also be designed to promote improved outcomes for underrepresented student groups (completion, employment, wages, etc.). These systems are most effective when outcomes- and performance-based funding comprise a significant portion of the overall postsecondary funding strategy.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Missouri – [Performance Funding](#)
- Tennessee – [Outcomes-Based Funding Formula](#)
- Texas – [State Technical College Funding Model](#)

RESOURCES

- [Performance-Based Funding in MN Higher Education, MN House of Representatives, January 2016](#)

POLICIES

- [Laws of Minnesota 2019, chapter 64](#)





POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Stackable Degrees and Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No statewide policy could be identified governing stackable credentials, though stackable credentials are included on the list of training outcomes for the eligible training provider list under WIOA. In 2022 the P-20 Education Partnership includes a Credentials of Value work group. One of the work group's goals is to adopt a statewide definition of "high-quality credential," including "the need of credentials to be stackable," but as of this case study it remains uncoded.

Stackable credentials in Minnesota appear to be driven at the postsecondary institution level rather than at the state level. The state requires technical colleges to recognize postsecondary career and technical education credits earned as part of a diploma or certificate program toward any available degree in the same program. This may lead to pockets of innovation, such as the Mechatronics Industrial Maintenance Certificate (9 courses) or Intermediate Mechatronics Engineering Technology diploma (12 courses) stacking to a Mechatronics Engineering Technology AAS Degree at South Central College (MN State system).

MN DEED found that only 11.9% of 2007-11 postsecondary graduates completed a higher, second credential within four years—including students who earned an associate degree and went on to complete a bachelor's degree. While the study outlines significant limitations of the data (excluded students who left MN, were self-employed, were federal employees, over age 40, etc.), analyses like these can help inform statewide policies and strategies to provide pathways for learners to advance their credentials—and in their careers.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The state could consider adopting policies and/or guidance on stackable credentials within program areas and across postsecondary systems. This could include identifying a portfolio of credentials that are recognized and valued by industry—and standardizing how those credentials can count for postsecondary credit. Additionally, the state can consider reporting on outcomes for learners who leverage stackable credentials to identify best practices for replication.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Stackable Credential Legislation](#)
- Idaho – [SkillStack](#)
- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN DEED - WIOA - Eligible Training Provider List policy](#)
- [MN DEED - Stackable Credentials: Myths and Reality](#)
- [2022 P-20 Education Partnership Report to the Legislature](#)

POLICIES

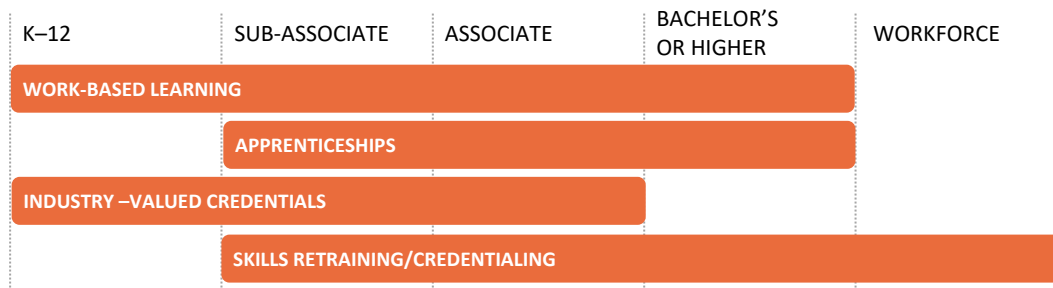
- [MSA 136F.32](#) – Degrees; Diplomas; Certificates





WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue help to prepare a strong workforce within the state.



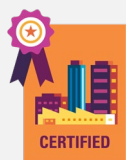
WORK-BASED LEARNING

Establish a statewide K-12 and postsecondary work-based learning program that promotes learning through a series of progressive learner experiences both in the classroom and in a work setting. Provide guidance and support for how education and business and industry collaborate to achieve mutual priorities.



APPRENTICESHIPS

Establish clearly defined program guidance for state-promoted apprenticeships outlining prerequisites, requirements, funding, stakeholder incentives and participant outcomes.



INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIALS

Ensure all industry credentials earned in K-12 or postsecondary are aligned with high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations and valued by state and regional employers.



SKILLS RETRAINING/CREDENTIALING

Identify and promote non-degree programs and credentials that support new, transitioning and displaced learners in career change and advancement. Ensure that supports include funding supports for learners and incentives for participating employers who train or retrain them.





KEY POLICY

Work-Based Learning



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

All state-recognized CTE programs of study must incorporate authentic, industry-valued work experiences at the K-12 and/or postsecondary level. The K-12 Work-Based Learning Handbook states that internships, youth apprenticeships or registered apprenticeships meet this requirement—and specifically excludes career exploration and career awareness activities. The state identifies characteristics of high-quality work-based learning programs to include: connecting school-based learning to work-based learning; sequential learning opportunities; integrated, formal leadership development activities; defined collaboration between business and education; a licensed work-based learning coordinator/supervisor; parental support and involvement; safety/business rules/expectations; the use of industry standards in developing training plans, and documentation of the work experiences. The state has also issued an optional work-based learning framework for school districts. However, no postsecondary WBL policies and/or quality criteria could be found.

The Dept. of Labor and Industry’s Youth Skills Training (YST) Program approves and provides grants to promote and support partnerships among schools, employers, and the community to encourage 16-17 year olds to learn more about in-demand occupations through paid work experience. The YST program and the state’s K-12 WBL initiatives are not connected in policy or intentionally aligned at the state level; however, some LEAs may individually align and/or braid funding between their WBL and YST programs. Importantly, the YST program guide (and enacting law) sets lower program expectations for YST than current statewide goals: 80% graduation rate (vs. 90% goal for DOE) and 60% credential attainment (vs. 70% statewide attainment goal).

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

While the state has a thorough list of K-12 work-based learning expectations, it is not clear if these expectations are being met and whether/how the state measures progress in terms of WBL quality and learner access/participation—through traditional WBL experiences or related programs (like YST). Additionally, there is little information about the availability and quality of WBL experiences at the postsecondary level. The state could strengthen its WBL offerings and implementation by requiring the MN Dept. of Education, MN State and MN Dept. of Labor and Industry to strategically align and annually report on the WBL opportunities provided to students, including demographic data, to allow policymakers to examine the quality of each type of WBL experiences and whether those opportunities are distributed equitably. This review could be incorporated into a statewide return on investment analysis.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – [Work-Based Learning Practicum](#)
- Georgia – [Work-Based Learning Framework](#)
- Rhode Island – [PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN Dept. of Education, Programs of Study](#)
- [MN Dept. of Education, CTE Work-Based Learning](#)
- [MN Dept. of Labor and Industry, Youth Skills Training Program](#)

POLICIES

- [MAR 3505.2550](#) Minimum Standards for Instructional Program Approval
- [MSA 175.46](#) Youth Skills Training Program





WORKFORCE READINESS

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Apprenticeships



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Department of Labor and Industry oversees registered apprenticeships. From 2014-20 the number of active apprenticeship programs declined, while the number of active apprentices appears to have plateaued (11,003 as of July 2021). The construction industry accounts for an overwhelming majority of the registered apprentices (roughly 90% in 2021). The state received a \$5 million federal grant to build apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, information technology and transportation, which are run through the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline program. The state also received \$1.8 million from the U.S. Dept. of Labor to expand apprenticeships through the APEX Initiative. Additionally, \$1.3 million (federal and state) supports the MN Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Initiative to assist employers with developing apprenticeship programs. Employers can receive up to \$5,000 for each apprentice.

Notably, Minnesota does not have a consistent definition for youth apprenticeships. MSA 124D.47 describes features of a youth apprenticeship program, namely that it must integrate academic instruction and work-related learning, pay apprentices for their work, use competency-based measures to evaluate learner progress, and culminate in academic and occupational credentials from the participating school. The law does not address the acquisition of postsecondary credit as part of a youth apprenticeship. MNDOE requires a youth apprenticeship to include (1) a career seminar course, (2) at least 120 hours of related technical instruction, (3) 50 hours of safety training and (4) 450 hours of paid work experience, supervised by an employer mentor and a licensed WBL coordinator. Notably, these youth apprenticeship hours and experiences do not transfer to the state's Registered Apprenticeship program. Finally, the Youth Skills Training (YST) program, which may operate as a de facto youth apprenticeship program via the Dept. of Labor and Industry, uses a third set of requirements and definitions.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can enhance its registered apprenticeship programs by building relationships to secure more employer participation. Additionally, the state could conduct a return on investment analysis of the funds spent on registered apprenticeship programs, their outcomes, and efforts to expand the programs beyond the construction sector. Additionally, the state can increase its focus on aligning, growing and scaling youth apprenticeship opportunities for high school students—including improving communications to students/families and ensuring students can earn postsecondary credits alongside their related technical instruction and on-the-job training; and apply their experiences to Registered Apprenticeship programs. .

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Iowa – [Earn and Learn](#)
- Kentucky – [Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky](#) and [Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship](#)
- New Jersey – [Apprenticeship Network](#)
- South Carolina – [Apprenticeship Carolina](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN Apprenticeship Advisory Board](#)
- [MN Dual-Training Pipeline](#)
- [MN Department of Labor and Industry, Registered Apprenticeships](#)
- [MN DOE, CTE Work-Based Learning](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 124D.47](#) Comprehensive Youth Apprenticeship Program
- [MSA Chapter 178](#) Apprentice Training





KEY POLICY

Industry-Valued Credentials



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

No current statewide policy could be found governing the identification and promotion of industry-valued credentials for K-12 and/or postsecondary. However, this seems to be a focus of the P-20 Education Partnership (see Cross-Agency Shared Priorities).

The 2016 MN Legislature directed the Dept. of Education, the Governor's Workforce Development Council and the P-20 Education Partnership to establish a list of qualifying industry credentials to be used to allocate funding to K-12 schools in which a student earned a qualifying credential (\$500/student up to \$1 million). Between 2017-21, the department awarded \$559,000 for 1,118 qualifying students. The initial qualifying industry credential list contained several credentials that were unlikely valued by employers in the state. Unfortunately, funding for the incentive was not continued, and the qualifying list of credentials not maintained. Finally, the state does not collect data on student attainment of industry-valued credentials.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can continue to focus on developing an ongoing cross-agency process to regularly identify and promote a list of employer-valued credentials with a greater emphasis on quality. Identified credentials should be required to meet rigorous criteria related to aligned occupation's demand, skill, and wages. The list should be shared with schools and postsecondary institutions in the state, updated annually and promoted to students and parents. Finally, the state can consider resurrecting the incentive program (based on a new list) as it is a powerful tool to encourage schools to offer and students to earn qualifying industry credentials within their chosen pathway.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Promoted Industry Certifications](#)
- Kentucky – [Valid Industry Certifications](#)
- Louisiana – [Industry-Based Certification State Focus List](#)

RESOURCES

- [Minnesota Department of Education, Certification Incentive Revenue](#)

POLICIES

- [Laws of Minnesota 2016, chapter 189, article 25, section 61](#)





KEY POLICY

Skills Retraining/Credentialing



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Minnesota provides several upskilling and retraining grants to assist employers and workers. The MN Jobs Skills Partnership provides up to \$400,000 to educational institutions that partner with employers to develop job training/retraining. This program has a matching requirement.

The Pathways Program awards grants up to \$400,000 per project to assist low-income individuals with training. The Job Training Incentive Program provides training grants up to \$200,000 to new or expanding businesses in certain non-large-metropolitan areas in the state. The Dual-Training Grant Program, funded at \$4 million for FY 2022 and FY 2023, provides grants to employers or organizations to train employees through the Dual-Training Pipeline program in four identified industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care and information technology. There is a matching requirement (25%) for grantees whose gross revenue exceeds \$25 million in the previous calendar year.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can consider strengthening and aligning the reporting requirements to include a return on investment analysis for these programs—individually and collectively—to examine each program’s quality and learner outcomes (including subsequent employment and wages against a targeted threshold) to ensure that each program is having its intended impact. These programs may also benefit from focusing on higher-demand, higher-skill, and middle- to high-wage occupations and to help low-income individuals climb the economic ladder.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant](#)
- Ohio – [TechCred](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN DEED Training Grant Programs](#)
- [Dual Training Competency Grant 2022 Annual Report](#)
- [MN Dual-Training Pipeline program](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 136A.246](#) Dual Training Competency Grants
- [MSA 116L.02](#) Job Skills Partnership Program





EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.

| K-12 | SUB-ASSOCIATE | ASSOCIATE | BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER | WORKFORCE |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES | | | | |
| LEGAL BARRIERS | | | | |



INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES

Establish, sustain and promote a comprehensive set of industry and employer engagement incentives for supporting education to workforce pathways. Incentives may include grant funds, tax credits, or local and regional support services.



LEGAL BARRIERS

Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers' compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.





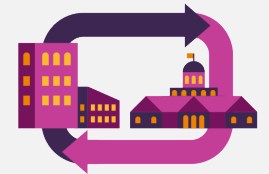
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Industry Engagement Incentives



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Job Training Incentive Program provides training grants up to \$200,000 to new or expanding businesses in certain non-large-metropolitan areas in the state. The Dual Training Competency Grant program, funded at \$4 million for FY 2022 and FY 2023, provides grants to employers or organizations to train employees in four identified industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care and information technology. There is a matching requirement (25%) for grantees whose gross revenue exceeds \$25 million in the previous calendar year.

Employers in the Youth Skills Training (YST) program can apply for a YST Grant up to \$100,000, which provides funds that can be used for marketing, recruitment, training, transportation, or student certifications, but cannot be used to pay students' wages. There is a total of \$1 million available in YST Grant funding. Funding is for programs that are already approved rather than incentives to start a new program.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can consider incentives designed to increase employer engagement, particularly at the K-12 level. These incentives could include financial support for employers that hire students in a formal, work-based learning program (including youth apprenticeships). As with all employer or retraining incentives, priority should be given to opportunities that connect students with occupations that are in-demand and provide a living wage.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – [Work-Based Learning Premium Credit](#)
- Indiana – [Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant](#)
- Iowa – [Tax Credit](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN DEED Training Grant Programs](#)
- [Dual Training Competency Grant 2022 Annual Report](#)
- [MN Dept. of Labor and Industry, Youth Skills Training Program](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 136A.246](#) Dual Training Competency Grants
- [MSA 175.46](#) Youth Skills Training Program





EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Legal Barriers



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Youth Skills Training (YST) program provides funding and a process for local programs to be exempt from certain state child labor laws, through designation by the Commissioner of Labor and Industry as an “approved training program”.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota could build on the success of the YST by expanding the process for “approved training program” exemptions to apply to other types of K-12 WBL experiences, such as internships or youth apprenticeships. Additionally, the state could further reduce barriers for employers engaging in K-12 work-based learning, including ameliorating employer concerns over liability issues or workers’ compensation, age restrictions, etc. To understand real barriers or overcome perceived barriers, the state should consider regularly engaging with employers to listen and address employer concerns that prohibit more employers from engaging in work-based learning opportunities and career pathways.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Kentucky – [Apprenticeship Programs & Partnerships](#)
- Rhode Island – [Work Immersion Training Grant](#)
- Texas – [Insurance Coverage](#)

RESOURCES

- [Youth Skills Training Program Guide](#)

POLICIES

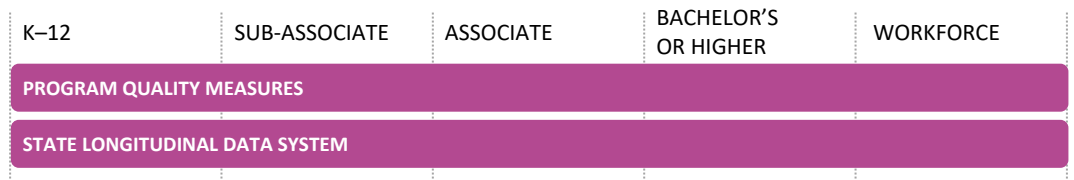
- [MSA 181A.07.7](#) Minimum age and maximum hour exemptions – Approved training programs





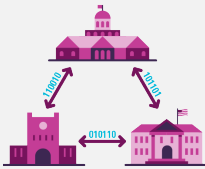
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.



PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES

Establish shared statewide definitions and measures for quality of and success in education to workforce pathways. Ensure these shared priorities extend across agencies and systems and inform decisions about program offerings, funding and outcomes.



STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

Ensure the state's cross-agency data system collects and reports on data needed to evaluate education workforce programs against shared metrics for quality and success. Data should span agencies and education systems and into the workforce to inform decision-making and drive outcomes.





DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

Program Quality Measures



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Minnesota has a postsecondary education attainment goal of 70% by 2025 for residents ages 25 to 44. Currently, 62.5% of its residents (25-44) meet the goal, with demographic disparities.

The MN Dept. of Education, Office of Higher Education, and MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development routinely collaborate (e.g., data systems, P-20 Education Partnership). However, a shared vision and aligned quality/outcomes measures for education to workforce pathways appear to be missing. Inconsistencies include the use of the state's labor market information in informing programs of study and wage thresholds for incentives or program approval.

The MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development maintains a dashboard that publicly shares performance data on its workforce development programs. Additionally, it maintains a dashboard on the employment outcomes for postsecondary completers. However, there does not appear to be similar dashboard for career pathways at the secondary/postsecondary level, although the Office of Higher Education does maintain dashboards on enrollment and educational attainment.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The state can consider establishing greater consistency in defining high-quality career pathways and workforce training opportunities and the metrics that will be used to evaluate success. Additionally, the state should consider creating similar dashboards for career pathways to assist students, parents, and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on employment, wages and future success.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Talent Pipeline Report](#)
- Indiana – [Governor's Workforce Cabinet](#)
- Rhode Island – [PrepareRI](#)

RESOURCES

- [MN OHE, Educational Attainment Goal 2025](#)
- [MN DEED, Report Card](#)
- [MN DEED, Graduate Employment Outcomes](#)

POLICIES

- [MSA 135A.012](#) Higher Education Attainment Goal





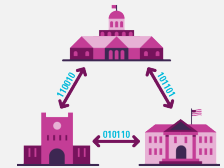
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Minnesota



KEY POLICY

State Longitudinal Data System



STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Minnesota uses several longitudinal data systems. The Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) is led by the Office of Higher Education and collects data from the MN Dept. of Education, Office of Higher Education and the Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The system matches student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary education and into the workforce.

CareerForce MN's Workforce One is the state's primary tool for tracking workforce training program data. DEED also uses the Minnesota Works data system to help job seekers find work and employers fill job vacancies. However, the state has noted that Minnesota Works is outdated and not integrated with the CareerForce MN data system. The state does not have a universal data collection system for workforce development programs.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Minnesota can continue its efforts to integrate education and workforce data systems and assess its progress in meeting its data system goal. In addition to collecting and matching data, the state can also continue to make impactful data accessible to learners, families and employers – empowering them with information about the availability, quality and outcomes of pathways and experiences across education and workforce systems.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – [Talent Pipeline Report](#)
- Florida – [Talent Development Council](#)
- Kentucky – [KYStats](#)

RESOURCES

- [Minnesota Works](#)
- [CareerForce MN](#)
- [MN SLEDS](#)
- [Minnesota Combined State Plan](#)

POLICIES

N/A

