



TRANSITION POINTS

The Education Strategy Group Newsletter

How are states leading the way to innovate for recovery?

State and local leaders have a real chance to turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to drive new approaches to education that open up economic opportunity. In late June, ESG President & CEO Matt Gandal made the case for using funds states received as part of the CARES Act to take bold action and drive innovation. In addition to the states he highlighted in the post, more states have introduced creative ideas to deploy their funding in recent weeks. Missouri, for example, has announced a partnership with Coursera, an online learning platform, to offer free access to 3,800 courses to unemployed individuals through its Return Strong Missouri effort. The initiative aims to help people “develop the knowledge and skills to become re-employed,” and gives state residents the opportunity to take courses and earn certificates through the end of the year. It will be crucial for more states to take the lead in devising new ways to open up educational and economic opportunities for displaced individuals.



States also have the opportunity to leverage a new competitive grant program announced by the U.S. Department of Education to align pathways and programs with the changing economy and prioritize credentials that lead to in-demand jobs. This can provide needed resources to help states expand their programs, perform the due diligence necessary to ensure they are truly aligned with the shifting economy, and design innovative new ways to equip students for economic success.

WEBINAR: Quality Credentials for Economic Recovery



Many displaced workers have indicated an intent to upskill through shorter-term non-degree credential programs in an effort to find gainful employment. To prepare them for a path that leads to a good job, our education and workforce systems must be positioned to understand which non-degree credentials have market value in the current economy.

Please join ESG and our partners at the National Skills Coalition **this Wednesday, July 22 at 2 p.m. ET** to examine emerging strategies in three leading states that analyze real-time labor market and hiring data to inform which non-degree credentials are embedded within demand-driven education and training programs. This free online event, presented with the support of Lumina Foundation, will feature a discussion with:

- **Jan Yoshiwara**, Executive Director, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- **Kenyatta Lovett**, Assistant Commissioner of Workforce Services, Tennessee Department

of Labor

- **Chris Lowery**, Senior Vice President of Workforce and Careers, Ivy Tech Community College

Register

Making A Comeback: Improving Online Education

The sixth installment in the Making A Comeback webinar series - presented by ESG, the Association of Community College Trustees, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association - is coming up on **Wednesday, July 29 at 2 p.m. ET.**



Even as some campuses move toward physical re-opening, institutions need to consider the longer-term potential and implications of virtual learning. As more institutions go online, how will institutions and systems ensure high-quality online learning opportunities? Join us for a discussion on improving online education with:

- **Keith Curry**, President, Compton College
- **Jon Sizemore**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Distance Education and Innovation, University System of Georgia
- **Belle Wheelan**, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College

Register

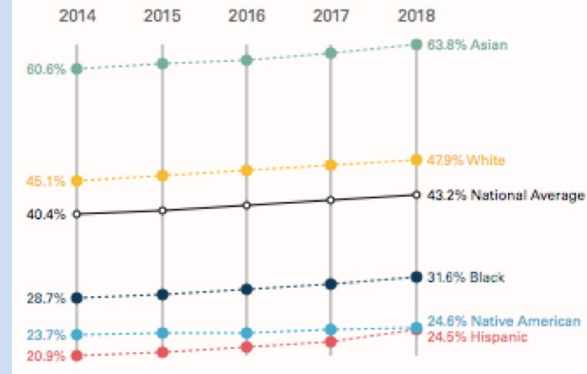
ESG Joins NGA and AACC in Supporting States Through New Reskilling and Recovery Network

ESG is pleased to support states through a new network launched by the National Governors Association and the American Association of Community Colleges aimed at identifying and scaling strategies to help workers succeed in a post-pandemic economy. 20 states have joined the new network, which will connect governors' offices, community colleges, and workforce and industry leaders. Supported by Lumina Foundation and the Siemens Foundation, the network will join state and community college institutional leaders to offer targeted assistance and identify strategies to give workers the skills necessary to succeed in an economy reshaped by the pandemic. For full details, please see [NGA's press release](#) announcing the network launch.

Stronger Nation 2020: New Data on Postsecondary Attainment from Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation recently released the 2020 edition of its *Stronger Nation* report, which tracks postsecondary attainment in the United States in pursuit of the foundation's goal that 60 percent of Americans possess a

postsecondary credential by 2025. Although the national attainment rate - which stands at 51.3 percent - has increased by over 10 percentage points since 2008, faster progress is needed to meet the 2025 goal. Furthermore, significant gaps between different racial and ethnic groups persist; postsecondary attainment rates for Black, Hispanic, and Native American individuals continue to fall well below the national average.



This year, recognizing their growing value to both employers and job-seekers, the Foundation included data on those who possess industry-recognized certifications. ESG is currently partnering with Lumina Foundation and the National Skills Coalition to help postsecondary systems and institutions and workforce development organizations include shorter-term credentialing options within programs that offer viable pathways to economic opportunity. This work, which will build upon our [existing efforts](#) to help states identify and prioritize high-value non-degree credentials, will add a direct focus on including these credentials as part of a COVID-19 recovery strategy.

Dive into the 2020 Stronger Nation data and read more about the work that Lumina Foundation is supporting in pursuit of its 60 percent by 2025 goal [here](#).

Accelerate Recovery: Summer Roundup



In early April, ESG began publishing the #AccelerateRecovery blog series, offering examinations of key strategies for leadership to prioritize in their efforts to accelerate economic recovery for our country and our most vulnerable populations. All posts are available [here](#), and below is a roundup of

posts published since early June.

Spotlight: D.C. Expands Support for College-Bound Grads : The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) recently announced a first-of-its-kind program to support DCPS alumni as they transition to and through college. We sat down with Erin Ward Bibo, Deputy Chief of College & Career Programs, to discuss DCPS Persists, which aims to increase the district’s college graduation rate by 10 percentage points.

Three Months In: Inequitable Impact and the Education Alignment Imperative: Three months into the coronavirus pandemic, millions of Americans—particularly people of color and low-income individuals—are still struggling, even as the economic freefall has begun to show signs of slowing. A look at where we are as of mid-June and the strategies we must prioritize to facilitate an equitable recovery for all.

Building “Connection Currency” for More Equitable Opportunity: In a competitive labor market, landing a job is often tied directly to the type of credential and an individual’s access to economic and social resources. The ability to tap into a network—a group of people you are connected to personally or professionally that can provide information, counsel, and inroads to employers—is critical. This type of “connection currency” is known as social capital.

States Innovating with CARES Act Dollars: If the last recession taught us anything, it was that a high school diploma does not hold strong enough currency in the job market; those who had high-quality postsecondary credentials recovered much sooner than those who did not. If state leaders want their education systems to be part of the solution to our current recession, they will need to take dramatic new steps to shore up leaks in the K-12 to postsecondary pipeline and show real

ESG HIGHLIGHTS: Meet Our New Team Member

Heather Justice, Director

Heather joins ESG to support the growing portfolio of work around career readiness. Prior to joining ESG, Heather served as the Division Director for College, Career and Military Preparation within the Texas Education Agency, where she oversaw the implementation of the Texas Regional Pathways Network, high-quality Career and Technical Education programs, work-based learning, industry certifications of value, and College and Career Readiness School Models. During this time Heather also served as the Secretary and Treasurer on the Board of Advance CTE.



Prior to joining the Texas Education Agency, Heather was the Executive Director of Career and Technical Education for the Tennessee Department of Education. In this role she managed the comprehensive reform of Career and Technical Education programs of study, instituted data sharing agreements to obtain industry certification data, overhauled licensing of CTE educators, and established a statewide professional development model for CTE educators. To learn more about [Heather](#) and her work supporting ESG's [Career Readiness portfolio](#), visit our [website](#).



Education Strategy Group is a mission-driven consulting firm that works with K-12, higher education, and workforce leaders to achieve greater impact. We work across sectors and across the aisle to move the needle on issues that are critical to improving student success.

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