


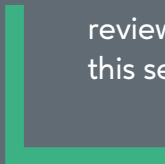
# Adult-Ready Self-Assessment for States

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States create the enabling conditions to support, incentivize, and make equitable change for post-traditional learners possible. States can work to set new standards and expectations through policy, funding, legislation, and measures of accountability. States can disseminate information and convene stakeholders to facilitate planning. States can connect this work to other relevant initiatives.








Self-assessment, then, for states is about determining which strategies or actions to invest in and how to provide optimal and relevant forms of support to encourage equity and spur implementation and scale across institutions and systems. This tool can be used to 1) assess the degree to which strategies have been implemented and scaled, and 2) prioritize or re-prioritize actions within those strategies to deploy next. Be sure to review the five priorities for adult-ready transformation prior to engaging this self-assessment.






# Assess

Prior to assessing the degree to which adult-ready strategies have been implemented and achieved at scale, pull together a cross-cutting group of stakeholders. Include leaders from higher education, workforce development, health and human services, veterans affairs, and labor and economic development. Then, complete the assessment as a group. Across the five priorities for achieving adult-friendly transformation, determine which actions have not been implemented, are in the planning stages, have been implemented but not at scale, are at scale but need improvement, and are at scale with no major need for improvement. Categories below are defined as:






- ✓ **This is not a priority:**  
This action is not being implemented at the state level and there is little interest in doing so.
- ✓ **This is not yet a priority and is worth considering:**  
This action is not being implemented, but may be in the future.
- ✓ **This is a priority and we plan to implement it:**  
Our state is engaging in planning to effectively implement this strategy.
- ✓ **This is a priority with work underway, but not at scale:**  
This action is being implemented, but not to all learners who would benefit from it.
- ✓ **This is a priority and is implemented at scale:**  
This action is being effectively applied to all learners who would benefit from it.








Strategy/Action	 This is not a priority	 This is not yet a priority and is worth considering	 This is a priority and we plan to implement it	 This is a priority with work underway, but not at scale	 This is a priority and is implemented at scale	Comments/analysis on status and opportunity
ACCESSIBILITY						
Ensure institutional and state aid works for post-traditional learners						
Reduce barriers within current financial aid programs or design new ones for post-traditional learners						
Incorporate strategic emergency grants as a key component of aid offerings						
Braid state and federal funding						
Use financial levers to increase postsecondary engagement and progression for key post-traditional populations						
Expand use of Ability to Benefit						
Forgive unpaid balances to promote re-enrollment and transfer						

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Conduct comprehensive outreach to all post-traditional learners						
Launch a comprehensive campaign aimed at (re) enrolling post-traditional learners						
Orient marketing materials around post-traditional learners						
Be transparent about the time, cost and value of programs						
PROGRAM CHANGE						
Design programs for flexibility and convenience						
Modify course pace, frequency and schedules						
Infuse competencies and skills into the curriculum						
Develop pathways that leverage and support all skill and preparation levels						
Systematize credit for prior learning						



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DATA						
Strengthen data measurement and collection systems to better monitor and evaluate post-traditional learner outcomes						
Create common metrics and definitions for post-traditional learners						
Connect state data across agencies to improve measurement and disaggregation of long-term outcomes						
Leverage national data sets to measure success indicators and outcomes for post-traditional learners						
Transparently report on established goals for post-traditional learner enrollment and outcomes						

Strategy/Action	 This is not a priority	 This is not yet a priority and is worth considering	 This is a priority and we plan to implement it	 This is a priority with work underway, but not at scale	 This is a priority and is implemented at scale	Comments/analysis on status and opportunity
PARTNERSHIPS						
Engage employers and workforce systems to promote relevance						
Use labor market data to identify and be more explicit about the credentials and programs that have labor market value						
In partnership with employers and industry associations, develop pathways aligned with labor market needs						
Collaborate with employers to provide applied learning experience that bridge learning and work						
Participate in or encourage regional consortia to develop sustainable talent ecosystems						
Partner to provide critical wrap-around supports						
Drive collaboration and information-sharing among local and state agencies to expand access to public benefits						

# (Re)Prioritize

After completing the assessment, use the reflection questions below to determine how your state is faring on each of the five priorities. The questions in the planning guide are designed around five categories/focus areas to ensure that planning and implementation are equitable, inclusive, aligned, and fully poised to succeed at scale. Take your time to walk through these questions as a group. Identify any patterns that emerge. Identify key gaps to address. Determine if existing efforts are spread across the five priority areas or if they are concentrated in just one or two priorities. Come back to these questions at regular points in the process. If there are certain questions or components that can not be answered or are not resolved, take the time to address them.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT PLANNING

### EQUITY:

- What is required to develop these actions in a way that will reach and support all key populations?
- Are there any policies or components of these actions that might leave out or disadvantage certain populations? If so, how can that be addressed in the earliest phase of planning to resolve it?
- Are key student populations included in the planning process to ensure the actions are designed to sufficiently meet their needs?

### STATE POLICY AND LEGISLATION:

- Does state policy already exist to support this strategy? If so, what revisions are needed to help take this strategy to scale? If not, is policy needed to support implementation and scale?
- Would any existing policies create potential barriers for this strategy for specific populations and/or all populations? If so, what steps can we take now to address this?
- If it is not possible to implement this strategy through any other means, should the state explore proposing legislation to enable implementation?
- If legislation is the only option, how can the state bring together all relevant stakeholder groups to inform the design of the legislation?

### COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY:

- What is needed to help make the case for and build ownership to support implementation of this strategy?
- Who are the primary audiences and stakeholders that need to be communicated with about this strategy and what is the best way to go about doing this?
- Is it useful to bring together key stakeholders to plan implementation, discuss progress, share learning, and hear from others who are doing this work?

### ACCOUNTABILITY:

- How can the state ensure that implementation and scaling of this strategy is done in a transparent manner with clear expectations for outcomes?
- What steps can the state take to track progress on implementation and outcomes through data collection and analysis?

### FUNDING AND RESOURCES:

- Are additional funds required to implement and scale this strategy? If so, what steps are required to support the allocation of new funds?
- Are any existing resources available that can be used to help launch this strategy?
- In what other ways can the state help institutions and systems implement and scale this strategy?
- If additional forms of technical assistance are needed to support implementation, how can the state help facilitate this?





# Take Action

With priority strategies and actions identified, your state is now ready for action. Reference research, case studies and exemplars in each of the playbook action guides to inform concrete next steps for the work. If actions at the implementation level have been achieved, look to what is next for improvement and to go next level. Be sure to partner with and learn from institutional leaders to ensure key policy changes are implemented with fidelity.



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