



Texas Workforce Investment Council

Policy News Highlights

Issue 8, Quarter 4, December 2009

Texas Workforce Investment Council – Policy News Highlights is a quarterly review of selected reports relevant to the policy and research functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC). Federal and state agency websites, in addition to numerous public policy and educational databases, are scanned monthly for relevant and emerging issues. Reports are catalogued and stored electronically in TWIC’s Information Repository (IR). Topic areas include: economic development; higher education; K-12 education; literacy and adult basic education (ABE); and skills, training and employment.

Policy News Highlights is organized into three sections, beginning with selected articles that focus on workforce trends and issues that have received heightened attention over the previous months. The second section contains abbreviated summaries of recent articles of interest to the Council and the final section consists of a comprehensive list of all articles and their sources that were added to the IR in the last quarter.

This Quarter’s Selected Articles

This quarter’s highlight focuses on adult education and the workforce, and a group of four papers produced by the Workforce Development Strategies Group (WDSG) at the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) for their *One Step Forward* initiative. In 2007, this organization received a grant from the Walmart Foundation with the specific task of identifying quality indicators for what is referred to in these papers as “Adult Education for Work.” Adult Education for Work is aimed at helping low-skilled workers obtain the basic skills needed to succeed in the workplace of the 21st century and to enhance United States (U.S.) competitiveness in the 21st century. While family literacy, high school equivalency, English proficiency, citizenship training and life skills are important components of the current adult education system, the authors believe that there must also be a targeted focus on preparation for postsecondary education and training along with family-sustaining employment.

Adult Education for Work, in this guide, means the education and training low-skilled adults need to become prepared for postsecondary education or training, and for family-sustaining employment and career advancement.

In 2008, the National Center on Adult Literacy determined that Adult Education in the U.S. is “ill-equipped to meet 21st century needs.” It recommended the adult education and literacy system be transformed into an adult education

and workforce skills system, with the main goal of achieving postsecondary and workforce readiness. The U.S. is the only advanced democracy in the world where young adults currently have less likelihood of completing high school than their parents. Nevertheless, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that twice as many jobs will require a postsecondary credential over the

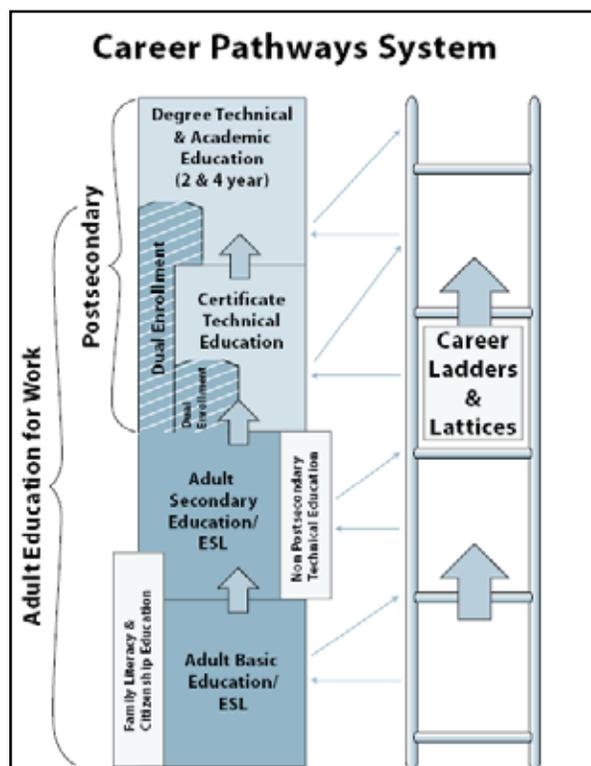
next ten years, up from 25 percent today and to 45 percent over the next ten years.

The Guide to Adult Education for Work – Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce outlines the approach that policymakers, program administrators and providers can take to begin modeling the current

adult education system into Adult Education for Work. Current adult education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), that is, instruction in reading, writing and math for adults with skill levels below high school; Adult Secondary Education (ASE) which includes preparation for high school equivalency exams; and English as a second language, which is instruction in reading, writing and English comprehension for non-native speakers. The *Guide* explains that a new focus is needed because huge segments of the existing workforce do not have the basic skills required to keep the U.S. workforce competitive. For example, 90 million American adults scored at the lowest level of proficiency in the U.S. 2005 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. Eighteen million adults do not have a high school diploma and half of adult immigrants report speaking English “less than very well.” Furthermore, this lack of preparedness is essentially an adult problem since the number of adults currently within the workforce is considerably higher than the number of school-age children who have not yet entered the workforce. These children will not impact the workforce system for many years to come and, in fact, approximately 65 percent of the U.S. workforce is past the range of the American education system.

In 2008, the current adult education system served less than three million adults, and the *Guide* asserts that a lack of funding and a deficient delivery service are responsible. The Adult Education for Work approach would cultivate a community-wide effort of bringing adult education providers and workforce system stakeholders together in developing a career pathways system to provide a comprehensive range of service and support for adults to succeed in preparing themselves for family-sustaining employment in the years to come. The *Guide* lays out a comprehensive career pathways system, and over 20 quality elements across seven focus areas to prepare adults for postsecondary learning and work.

The *Guide* concludes with the caveat that in order to be successful, the adult education system must focus on work readiness and preparation for postsecondary training for all adults. Communities and regions must commit to a career pathways system that incorporates community-wide partnerships between adult and postsecondary education systems, workforce and social service providers, employers, unions, and economic development agencies. Last, these efforts must merge to meet the goals of two groups: workers and regional employers. The *Guide* includes case studies from the state of Oregon, where a career pathways system has been implemented, and the city of Philadelphia, where the state’s workforce investment board has successfully partnered with the city’s literacy coalition to address the needs of low-skilled workers. ★



Background and Supporting Evidence for Adult Education for Work is quite similar to the *Guide*, and outlines steps that adult education can follow to develop and implement career pathways for low-skilled workers through work-oriented adult education programs and eventually, postsecondary programs. The paper discusses the “core strand” within adult education called Adult Education for Work that has the primary goal of assisting low-skilled adults acquire basic and/or English language and work readiness skills necessary for postsecondary training or education and family-sustaining employment. The authors emphasize that the necessity of this approach is

indicated by the fact that a large and growing part of the U.S. workforce has limited basic skills, which in turn threatens the nation’s economic security. ★

The *Employer Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce* gives employers information for developing more effective adult education programs. It presents a vision for more effective Adult Education for Work programming and elaborates on the role employers play in improving this system. The *Employer Guide* gives information about tactical actions employers can take to improve the Adult Education system and has examples of “best-in-class” employer involvement in Adult Education for Work programming. It describes tools that employers may use to assess their training needs and the quality of existing programs. For example, the paper suggests that an employer wanting a hand in program design and delivery might become a member of a local workforce board or establish partnerships with state agencies. In Texas, an initiative within the Texas Education Agency called TexasLEARNS has partnered with the Texas Workforce Commission. TexasLEARNS has created a demand-driven and industry-related curricula for Texas English language learners in three industries: health care, manufacturing and sales and service. ★

International Trends in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning considers strategies and programs that foreign countries have used to improve the basic skill level of adults. The authors focus primarily on the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The United Kingdom’s “Skills for Life,” program is a model based on nationally recognized competencies in literacy and numeracy as well as workplace skills such as problem-solving and teamwork, safety, computing and self-management. Other topics addressed in this paper include how these countries deal with financial incentives targeted at low-skilled workers and employer involvement in the workplace. ★

Again, all four papers were written for the *One Step Forward* initiative with the intent of identifying a set of indicators for programs designed to assist low-skilled workers in learning the basic skills needed for a globally competitive 21st century American workforce.

Abbreviated Summaries

Economic Development

Best Performing Cities of 2009, Milken Institute, November 2009.

The Milken Institute, in conjunction with Greenstreet Real Estate Partners, produces the Best-Performing Cities index. Each year it is updated and provides policymakers, business leaders and the public at large with an indication of which areas of the U.S. are thriving and which are not. The index uses a variety of indicators, but focuses on job creation and sustainability incorporating wage gains and technology concentration and growth. Due to the financial crisis that started in September 2008, the U.S. economy saw the greatest decline in Gross Domestic Product since World War II this past year. Texas took four of the top five spots and nine of the top 25 spots within the index’s 200 largest cities. Texas also had four of the top ten best-performing small cities. Austin-Round Rock was awarded the number one position in the overall Best-Performing City category, and according to the authors, is poised to be one of the few U.S. cities that will post jobs in 2009. Killeen-Fort Hood-Temple and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission took

Best Performing Cities: Top 25 Large Metros		
Rank in 2009 Index		
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	2009 Rank	2008 Rank
Austin-Round Rock, TX	1	4
Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX	2	13
Salt Lake City, UT	3	3
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	4	7
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	5	16
Durham, NC	6	21
Olympia, WA	7	9
Huntsville, AL	8	5
Lafayette, LA	9	14
Raleigh-Cary, NC	10	2
San Antonio, TX	11	15
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX*	12	29
Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX*	13	23
El Paso, TX	14	37
Wichita, KS	15	45
Corpus Christi, TX	16	88
Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA*	17	17
Baton Rouge, LA	18	40
Tulsa, OK	19	72
Greely, CO	20	20
Tacoma, WA*	21	8
Fort Collins-Loveland, CO	22	48
Little Rock-North Little Rock, Conway, AR	23	54
Shreveport-Bossier, LA	24	67
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV*		
*Indicates metropolitan division		
Source: Milken Institute		

second and fourth place. Houston-Sugarland-Baytown ranked number one in the top ten largest metros, and fifth overall among the largest 200 metros. Midland ranked first among the country's small cities. Best-performing metros in 2009 were cities that did not experience sizeable housing bubbles in the early 2000s, and had a low proportion of subprime mortgages. Other best-performing cities were closely linked with the oil and gas industry or with the growing alternative fuels and clean technology industries. ★

Crossing the Next Regional Frontier: Information and Analytics Linking Regional Competitiveness to Investment in a Knowledge-based Economy, U.S.

Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, October 2009.

This report begins with the premise that globalization has fundamentally changed economic development. Metropolitan, rural and individual localities now interact regionally. Policy development is no longer local, and has shifted to the regional level. In addition, success is no longer measured primarily through industrial recruitment. Regions are successful if they can innovate and have the education and skills necessary to maintain a competitive advantage. This paper presents a set of analytical tools to enable regional leaders to assess their workforce. It has a strategic component as well, which is a framework designed to assist regional leaders to collaborate in maximizing regional development goals. A practitioner's guide is available at www.statsamerica.org. ★

Thriving in Challenging Times: Connecting Education to Economic Development through Career Pathways, ICW, October 2009.

This publication was written to spotlight successful examples of career pathways, an educational model that creates relevant and challenging learning environments that keep students engaged and interested in school and work. A career pathway in this paper is defined as a coherent sequence of rigorous academic and career courses that begins in high school and leads to an associate degree, a bachelor's degree and beyond, and/

or an industry-recognized certificate or license. Another feature of career pathways is that they are developed and implemented by partnerships between educators, community leaders and employers. In other words, every career pathway requires three elements: secondary education, postsecondary education, and business. The paper gives examples of successful career pathway programs across the nation, including several from Texas, such as the A.J. Moore Academy of Finance in Waco, and the state's AchieveTexas program. ★

Higher Education

Postsecondary Institutions and Price of Attendance in the United States: Fall 2008, Degrees and Other Awards Conferred: 2007-08, and 12-Month Enrollment: 2007-08 - First Look, National Center for Education Statistics, October 2009.

This report provides information about data collected through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) on more than 6,500 postsecondary education institutions that participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs. For example, in 2007-08, there were 6,709 Title IV postsecondary institutions in the U.S. About 41 percent of these were classified as four-year, while 33 percent were two-year, and the remaining were less-than-two-year institutions. During this same period, private not-for-profit four-year institutions reported average tuition and required fees charges for full-time undergraduates of \$19,047. Private for-profit four-year institutions charged \$14,908 for tuition and required fees. Other findings were that public four-year institutions reported charging out-of-state undergraduates an average of \$13,595 and in-state undergraduates an average of \$5,730. ★

Strong Students, Strong Workers: Models for Student Success through Workforce Development and Community College Partnerships, Center for American Progress, December 2009.

This paper focuses on the role of community colleges as they relate to the workforce

development system with particular emphasis on the educational attainment of low-income youth and adults. Statistics show that the low incomes of the working poor in America are connected to low levels of postsecondary achievement within this community. Enrollments of low-income individuals in community colleges are not rising and those who do enroll often do not complete a credential. Furthermore, those who do enroll in community colleges frequently are not connected to areas of strong labor market demand. This paper reviews efforts currently being made by community colleges and states, such as systemic reforms to better link community colleges to labor markets and allow instructional and curricular reforms at community colleges to provide better labor market preparation. According to the authors, some of the more promising innovations

denialing, funding colleges and offering financial aid, and to promoting developmental education. Students must also be at the center of community college policies to achieve higher transfer rates to four-year colleges, to install more modern infrastructure and technology, to implement better data collection, and to develop and implement better standards for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness. ★

K-12

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation, Center for American Progress, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Frederick M. Hess, November 2009.

Alamo County Community College in Texas is one example of a community college sectoral program. The College, which participated in the Mott Foundation’s Breaking Through initiative, has enrolled many low-income and nontraditional adult students, and offers technical training in four industry clusters: allied construction, drafting and design, multi-modal transportation, and repair and manufacturing.

in this field are bridge and career pathway programs, modular coursework and stackable credentials that allow open entry and exit to students and course flexibility for working adults, integrated education, occupation and vocational training, and sectoral training to provide training for growth industries. ★

Re-imagining Community Colleges in the 21st Century, Center for American Progress, December 2009.

When the authors use the term “re-imagining community colleges,” they are focusing on the connection between students at these colleges and the advance learning and working worlds beyond these colleges. Community colleges must be viewed as entities with multiple missions and multiple organizations to perform multiple functions. Students must be at the center of multifaceted initiatives to incorporate new approaches to training and cre-

This paper is a follow up to an initiative taken two years ago on the part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for American Progress, and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute. The first report took a critical look at school performance across the country, while this paper focuses upon what states are currently doing to prepare for the future and to foster an entrepreneurial culture within their schools. The authors believe that the nation’s school system is outmoded and a relic of times past when those with only a high school diploma could anticipate leading prosperous lives. Consequently, they advocate innovation: the process of leveraging new tools, talent, and management strategies to craft solutions that were not possible or necessary in an earlier era.

Texas		
School Management	C	<div style="width: 33%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
Finance	B	<div style="width: 66%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	A	<div style="width: 100%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
Data: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A	<div style="width: 100%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B	<div style="width: 66%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
Technology	C	<div style="width: 33%; background-color: #a6c9ec;"></div>
State Reform Environment	?	
Gold Stars		

In *Leaders and Laggards*, Texas received a grade of “A” for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Texas has a high percentage of teachers enter the profession via an alternative certification process

and the state also requires new hires to pass basic skills and subject tests. Texas also received an “A” for its ability to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom. ★

Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto NAEP Scales: 2005-2007, National Center for Education Statistics, October 2009.

Each state, including Texas, has its own assessment system and its own standards for proficiency, so this report provides educators, parents and policymakers a common metric when reviewing state proficiency standards. *Mapping State Proficiency Standards* uses the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to compare proficiency standards from state to state. All states are required to administer the NAEP under the No Child Left Behind Act, so the NAEP is the only nationally representative test of student progress. The report showed that Texas, along with most states, was within the “basic” achievement level range, with the exception of fourth-grade reading. All but two states were below the fourth-grade level, but this is because states and the NAEP do not approach proficiency in the same way. The explanation is that most states regard proficiency as students being able to read at grade level, while the NAEP defines proficiency as “competency over challenging subject matter.” ★

Taking Root: Texas’ Lesson for Sustaining the College- and Career-Ready Agenda, Achieve, Inc. September 2009.



One aspect of Achieve Inc.’s initiative to assist states as they work to build and sustain their education agendas over the long term includes Taking Root, which analyzes strategies used in four states that have

successfully maintained education reforms over ten years. This paper details what education policies have made educational reform in Texas sustainable. One of the primary strengths of the Texas system has been good cooperation between the Governor, the state’s education agency and the Texas Legislature. Texas instituted standards-based reforms over 25 years ago and

has continued to ratchet up its standards and improve its performance over the last two decades. The paper outlines other key Texas strategies for sustainability, including strong support from the business community, building upon reforms continuously and over time, linking public school finance to reforms, and developing data-driven reform systems that can provide accurate assessments of improved school performance over a period of time. ★

Literacy and Adult Basic Education

Adult Education - Supporting the President’s Workforce and American Graduation Initiative, National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, November 2009.

This report focuses on the President’s challenge to education providers regarding adults attaining at least one year of higher education or career training. Some initiatives discussed include:

- Creation of career pathways in critical and emerging job sectors
- Partnerships with community colleges and workforce development programs toward attainment of college credits, certificates and degrees in high-demand areas
- Dual enrollment options with occupational training providers for adults seeking industry-based certificates in high-demand jobs

The paper includes statistics about adult education, such as: last year 2.3 million adults received adult education services through the Workforce Investment Act, and one million adults in the U.S. have less than a ninth-grade education. There is a sampling of various state strategies (including Texas) and a chart with decision points for state policy makers. The paper highlights Texas’ recent legislative mandate to align Adult Basic Education with postsecondary education. It also mentions the Texas Workforce Investment Council’s strategic action plan calling for the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission to design and implement an integrated Adult Basic Education and workforce skills training to improve employment outcomes for English language learners. ★

Skills, Training, and Employment

Effective Employer Engagement: the Year Up Model, the Workforce Strategy Center, November 2009.

According to the Workforce Strategy Center, two current and critical factors make the need to assist low-skilled and low-income youth find gainful employment of paramount importance: the worst economic downturn in the U.S. in decades, and the prediction of a massive shortage of educated and skilled workers to maintain the nation's competitive edge in the 21st century. *Effective Employer Engagement* is written for policymakers and practitioners to present Year Up as a viable business model for employer engagement. Year Up was founded in Boston in 2000 by a former software entrepreneur with the goal of preparing urban youth for promising careers and higher education. It relies on simple business principles, such as the importance of cultivating and maintaining relationships with business, understanding what businesses need and offering a superior solution. Year Up offers urban youth six months of intensive skills training that carries college credit and then places them in a six month corporate apprenticeship.

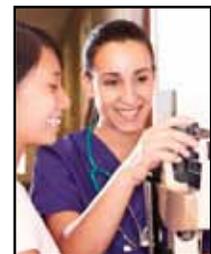
Our mission is to close the opportunity divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education.

—Gerald Chertavian, Founder

Year Up's outcomes are impressive with a 100 percent placement of qualified students into apprenticeships, 87 percent of graduates in full- or part-time jobs within four months of graduation, average wages of \$15 an hour and nearly 50 percent of graduates continuing postsecondary education. Year Up now has sites in Providence, New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco and Atlanta and has served nearly 1,900 students. ★

Employers, Low-Income Young Adults, and Postsecondary Credentials: A Practical Typology for Business, Education and Community Leaders, Workforce Strategy Center, October 2009.

The Workforce Strategy Center received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct this study of existing education and training programs that reflect employers' efforts to assist disadvantaged young adults obtain postsecondary credentials and a path to career track employment. Starting with over a hundred programs and distilling that number to 14, the authors highlight programs that meet four criteria: providing low-income youth with postsecondary credentials that lead to career track employment; involving employers and industries critical to the region's economy; maximizing employers' roles and commitment; and showing portability, scalability, and replicability. The purpose of the report is to inform business, education and community leaders, and funders who are interested in duplicating such programs. The writers have focused on common characteristics, key challenges and lessons learned as they highlight various models, which include community based organizations, community and technical colleges, employers, industry and social enterprise organizations. Each model represents a partnership with employers designed to assist disadvantaged persons gain solid employment through the attainment of a postsecondary credential and addresses local labor needs such as health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing. One example is the Metropolitan College in Kentucky which is a partnership between United Parcel Service (UPS), Jefferson Community and Technical College and the University of Louisville created 10 years ago to sustain Kentucky's largest employer, UPS. Project ARRIBA in El Paso, Texas is another example where occupational and workplace skills are supported by a case management approach for producing licensed vocational nurses, registered nurses, and allied health workers. Training is given through the University of Texas at El Paso and the El Paso Community College. ★



Earning and Learning: Options under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), CLASP, September 2009.

This policy brief defines several “earn and learn” models that are especially well-suited for low-skill adult workers who have been hit hard by the current recession. Earn and learn strategies provide workers with both an income and an opportunity to acquire or build skills for entering or regaining employment. On-the-job training (OJT) allows an individual to acquire work experience after being hired and to continue work after training is completed. OJT combines work with occupational skills training and employers may receive reimbursement for part of the hourly pay rate, making it a positive incentive for them to hire workers and support their skill development. Another model, paid work experience, is a “time-limited, structured learning experience in the workplace.” The brief notes that paid work experience is considered an intensive service under the WIA and should be targeted to persons who either have never worked or have had very limited work experience. The paper references other approaches such as transitional jobs programs that combine short-term subsidized employment with other services and work-study programs that offer part-time work to students. It also discusses registered apprenticeship programs as employment strategies. “Earn while you learn” strategies have not been extensively used under the WIA, partly because of limited funding. According to this brief, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act doubles resources available for workforce programs and therefore, presents new opportunities for combining work and learning. ★

The Greening of Registered Apprenticeship: An Environmental Scan of the Impact of Green Jobs on Registered Apprenticeship and Implications for Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) October 2009.

This study sets out the trends and activities of U.S. industries that are expected to be drivers of the emerging green economy. “Green” in this report is defined as “the various new processes, technologies and materials that will drive a more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient

approach to conducting business.” Registered Apprenticeship, because of its training approach and position as an entry point to many key industries, is poised to be “at the nexus of the green economy.” Industry stakeholders are taking advantage of new and flexible training approaches for current and green jobs. Pre-apprenticeship programs are viewed as providing pathways out of poverty to the green-collar economy. DOL encourages partnerships between Registered Apprenticeship, employers, and the education and workforce systems. ★



Rising Senior Unemployment and the Need to Work at Older Ages, Urban Institute, September 2009.

This paper looks at the effect of the 2007-09 recession on the older worker population. Prior recessions impacted older workers but to a lesser degree. For example, seniority rules in unionized areas protected layoffs among older workers, and workers who lost jobs after the age of 62 often chose to retire and collect Social Security benefits. However, in 2009, unemployment rates for older workers reached record high levels because fewer workers who were eligible for retirement actually dropped out of the labor force. Concerns about adequate retirement savings and fear about the stock market crash of 2008 prompted older workers who had lost their jobs to look for other work and remain in the labor force. The authors note that unemployment rates are higher for older adults who do not have a high school diploma. These rates also tend to be concentrated in certain industries, such as construction.

Unemployment at older ages has serious consequences. It takes older workers longer to find new jobs, and the earnings lost during unemployment take higher tolls on older workers who are closer to retirement. In addition, older workers who find jobs after unemployment usually must settle for earning less than they did formerly. The paper advocates that federal and state governments strengthen workforce development programs and upgrade employment

	1981-1982 Recession			2007-2009 Recession		
	Before (%)	After (%)	Pct. Point Difference	Before (%)	During (%)	Pct. Point Difference
Men						
55-61	3.7	7.3	3.6	3.2	7.3	4.1
62-64	3.6	4.9	1.3	2.6	6.3	3.7
65-69	3.3	5.0	1.7	3.7	6.6	2.9
70 and older	2.8	4.1	1.3	2.9	6.5	3.6
Women						
55-61	4.2	5.8	1.6	3.0	6.3	3.3
62-64	4.6	5.8	1.2	2.0	5.6	3.6
65-69	3.9	3.3	-0.6	3.0	6.8	3.8
70 and older	1.4	2.0	0.6	3.9	5.6	1.7

Notes: In 1981-82, the "before" rates are averages of November and December 1980 and January and February 1981, and the "after" rates are averages of November and December 1982 and January and February 1983. In 2007-09, the "before" rates are averages of April, May, June, and July 2007, and the "during" rates are averages of April, May, June, and July 2009.
Source: Author's computations from the Current Population Survey.

services offered at One-Stop career centers. It calls for higher levels of funding for workforce development programs, such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Other reforms policymakers should consider include changing Medicare secondary payer rules to require the federal health insurance system to give primary care coverage to workers 65 years and older. This would no longer force older workers to rely mainly on their employers' insurance, and this would improve their work prospects. The authors emphasize that the U.S. economy will be depending more on older workers as time goes by. In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 2008 adults over the age of 55 made up 18 percent of the workforce, which is the highest share for that age group in more than 40 years. ★

Steady as She Goes? Three Generations of Students through the Science and Engineering Pipeline, Heldrich Center, October 2009.

Reviewing data from the 1970s, 1990s and 2000s, this paper looks at Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) retention rates at three points of the STEM pipeline. These points are the high school to STEM degree in college, the completion of a STEM degree in college and first job, and completion of a STEM degree to obtaining a STEM job at mid-career. The report finds that retention rates are high overall from the late 1970s until the late 1990s. However, this strong retention rate is accompanied by declines within the population of highest performing students when top performers dropped out of

the STEM pipeline suddenly in the mid-to-late 1990s. The authors state that the overall trends showing increased numbers of students majoring in STEM refute arguments that students are uninterested or unprepared for STEM. Rather, they suggest that top high school graduates are no longer interested in STEM, or that STEM careers may not be as attractive as they once were to top performers. Similarly, the authors note that the decline in retention of the highest achievers at the college to first job point may not be due to lack of interest in STEM careers, but more to the fact that STEM firms are not able to attract these graduates. For example, financial institutions may be hiring highly qualified STEM graduates at much higher pay. In addition, considerable growth of the STEM workforce during the 1990s may have created jobs that are STEM-related, but not typically categorized as STEM careers, such as the occupations of patent attorney or manager in a technology firm. Therefore, the authors conclude that top performing students are not leaving STEM careers because they are not prepared or lack ability. Rather, they are in less visible STEM-related jobs. ★

Training Tomorrow's Workforce: Community College and Apprenticeship as Collaborative Routes to Rewarding Careers, Center for American Progress, December 2009.

In line with the nation-wide debate about increasing job opportunities and expanding training, this paper looks at apprenticeship and community colleges. Apprenticeship programs require a combination of supervised, work-based training and related academic instruction. Community colleges are ideally situated to provide the classroom related training that apprenticeship programs require, and collaboration between the two should be increased. Community colleges can offer instruction, college credit and certifications that would augment the status and long-term earnings of apprenticeship. Apprenticeship can benefit community colleges by showing immediate relevance to their students, providing an environment where students can demonstrate ability to function in the workplace, and allow community colleges the opportunity to share part of their education and training to supervised work

sites. The paper highlights examples of successful collaboration between community colleges and apprenticeship, and also also contains ten recommendations to expand such collaboration. For example, more resources directed to federal

and state apprenticeship offices would create more apprenticeship slots. In turn, more slots would increase the social and economic benefits of apprenticeship: added earnings and increased tax revenue. Another recommendation, tax credits, could also help marketing efforts and increase incentives for employers. ★

Apprenticeship by the numbers Demographic, education, and industry characteristics of apprentices, 2008	
	Percent of apprentices
Age	
16-24	21.8
25-34	42.5
35+	28.5
Unknown	7.3
Sex	
Female	5.4
Male	90
Unknown	4.6
Race	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6.3
Asian	1.4
Black	10.5
White	70.3
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	18.8
Non-Hispanic	76.4
Unknown	4.8
Education	
8th grade or less	1.3
9th to 12th grade	15.4
GED	10.5
High School graduate or more	72.8
Unknown	3.6
Industry	
Construction	56.4
Manufacturing	5.4
Public Administration	5.4
Services	6.4
Transportation/communication	12.6
U.S. Military	10.9
Wholesale and retail trade	1.4



Articles Placed in the Information Repository in the Last Quarter

Adult Education - Supporting the President's Workforce and American Graduation Initiative, National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, November 2009.

<http://www.naepdc.org/>

American Jobs Plan: A Five-Point Plan to Stem the US Jobs Crisis, Economic Policy Institute, November 2009.

http://www.epi.org/index.php/american_jobs/understanding_the_jobs_crisis

An analysis of self-employment outcomes within the Federal/State Vocational Rehabilitation System, Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, October 2009.

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The Texas Workforce Investment Council promotes the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce for Texas and advocates a workforce system that provides quality workforce education and training opportunities.

For more information, visit:

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