American Workforce Policy Advisory Board

Working Group: Increasing Data Transparency to Better Match American Workers with American Jobs

High-quality, transparent, and timely data can significantly improve the ability of employers, students, job seekers, education providers, and policymakers to make informed choices about education and employment—especially for matching education and training programs to in-demand jobs and the skills needed to fill them.

The Data Transparency Working Group drafted three recommendations to enhance existing efforts to create interoperable digital learning records that include education attainment, non-traditional learning pathways, experience, professional affiliations, and other certifications to help job seekers attain high wage jobs.

Goal

1. **Enable the widespread adoption of interoperable learning records (ILRs) across the education and workforce ecosystems**

   The Data Transparency Working Group has prepared a White Paper that lays the first stones of the foundation to develop tools for the adoption of ILRs across the education and workforce ecosystems.

Background

As outlined in the attached White Paper that the Data Transparency Working Group submits to the full American Workforce Policy Advisory Board, American learners deserve a way to translate education, training, and work experience into records of transferable skills that will provide them opportunities at higher wage occupations. Employers deserve to have a way to communicate to potential applicants what skills and abilities they require to fill a position. ILRs that use open standards can bridge education, training, and employment, helping individuals understand their own abilities, apply their skills, and advance in their careers. Today we have the technologies, protocols, and ontologies to develop ILRs that realize the potential of empowering America's workers with transparent, relevant, equitable, private, secure, portable, shareable, interoperable, and verifiable evidence of their achievements.

The potential audience for ILRs in the United States is enormous, and driving adoption across an audience this large and diverse is difficult. While no strategy can ensure widespread adoption, long odds can be made shorter by testing ILR ideas for defined segments in limited, defined-scope pilots. The building blocks of a true ILR ecosystem are already being created. The path to such an ecosystem may not be linear, but rather iterative and collaborative.

Recommendations to be submitted to the National Council for the American Worker:

Therefore, to enable the widespread adoption of ILRs, the Data Transparency Working Group recommends the following:

- **Create an ILR inventory** of projects and initiatives that are currently underway or planned for the near future. Scaling and partnering to build an ILR ecosystem depends, first, upon a full understanding of the wide range of relevant existing initiatives and stakeholders.

- **Convene an expert group who will develop an ILR project plan** that clarifies stakeholders' roles and incentives to both consume and issue credentials through ILRs. The expert group should include individuals with expertise in policy, governance, and technologies as they relate to ILRs and in designing projects that reflect best practice in using enterprise scale solutions to transform culture and operations. The project plan should include features and content required in an ILR minimum viable product and ecosystem, required resources, and objectives and key results.

- **Champion fast-track prototyping** among stakeholders in the ILR ecosystem to quickly bring an ILR Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to market.

The ILR ecosystem is emerging, very active, and on the cusp of rapid expansion. The first two recommendations note the need to assess the field more fully and outline common paths to new projects. Such planning is critical, but it should not delay additional prototyping if stakeholders are eager and poised to move forward. The goal is to bring a solution to market by Q2 2020 to demonstrate in a tangible way the art of the possible with respect to ILRs and to begin realizing the benefits to American employers and learners.