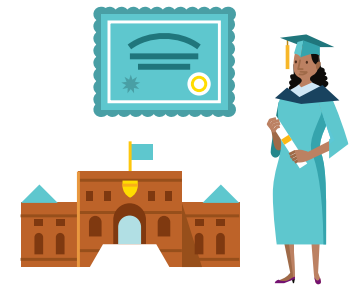


Mapping Postsecondary and Workforce Information Gaps in State Data Systems

State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) match data from different sources about individuals over time, and serve as an important resource for state policymakers, researchers, and the public. These systems contain privacy-protected data that follow an individual's progress through K-12, postsecondary education, training, social service programs, and the workforce, showing how combinations of courses and programs help people access credentials, employment, and higher earnings. While states have developed robust data systems, there are significant gaps in data. The cubes below illustrate what kind of postsecondary, workforce program, and employment data exist—and the critical data that's missing from most SLDS.

POSTSECONDARY DATA

Records that measure student access, progress, success, and affordability through higher education.



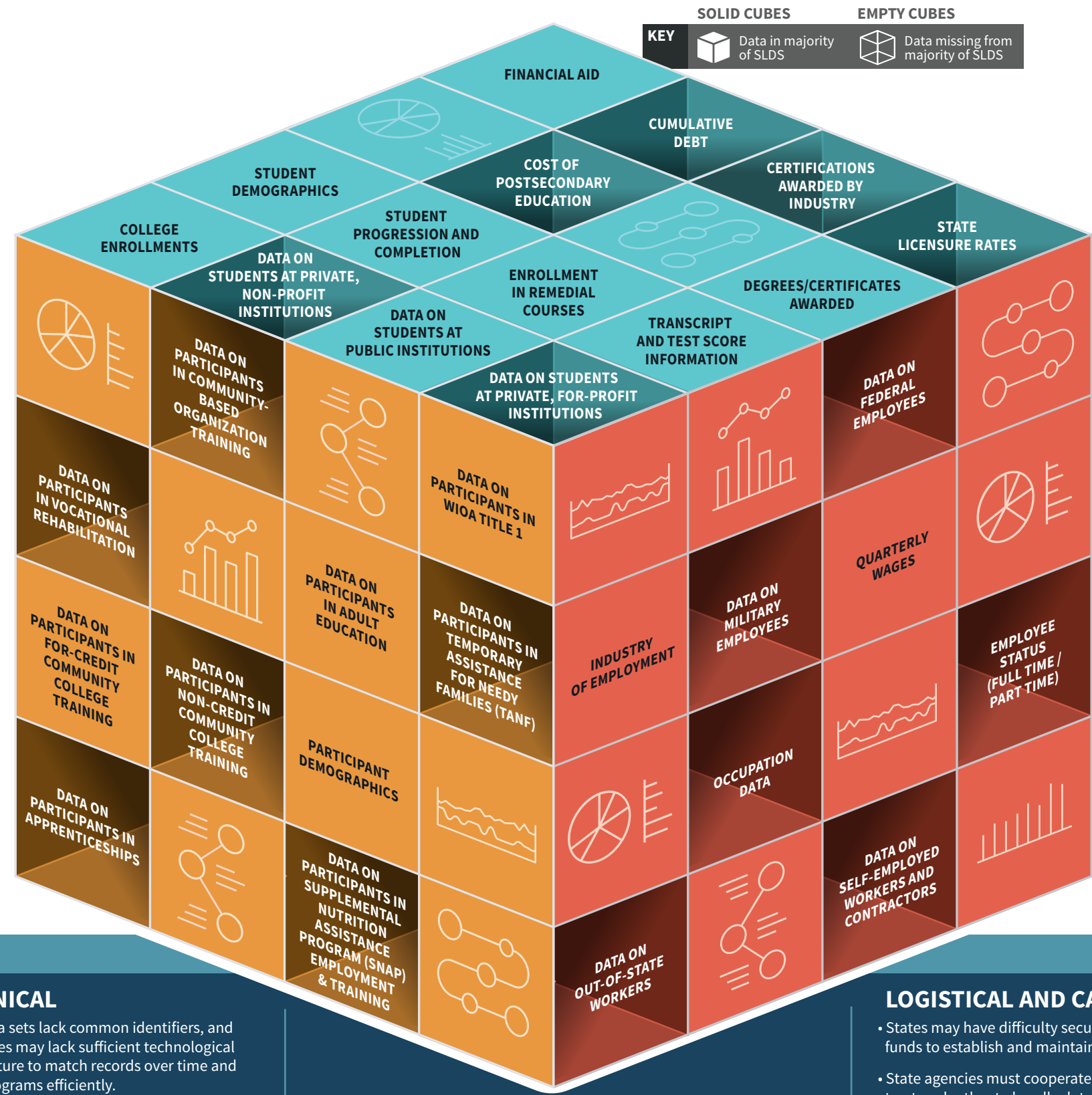
WORKFORCE PROGRAM DATA

Data on participants (demographics, services received, credentials attained) in programs designed to help workers build skills and find employment.



EMPLOYMENT DATA

Information about the employee, the employer, and wages.



CHALLENGES TO FILLING GAPS

LEGAL

- Multiple state and federal laws and regulations restrict access to and usage of education and employment data.

TECHNICAL

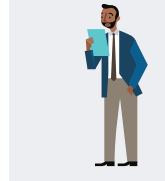
- Some data sets lack common identifiers, and some states may lack sufficient technological infrastructure to match records over time and across programs efficiently.

LOGISTICAL AND CAPACITY

- States may have difficulty securing sufficient funds to establish and maintain data systems.
- State agencies must cooperate, but often don't trust each other to handle data appropriately.
- Some states lack capacity to assess requests and clean, match, and bundle data in the proper format.

WHO USES THE DATA—AND WHY?

SLDS stakeholders rarely, if ever, need access to personally identifiable information (PII). Instead, the work described below utilizes aggregate or de-identified data. Entities that do house and collect PII should ensure that the data are secure and the privacy of students, participants, and employers is protected.



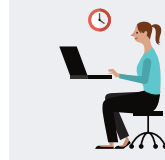
POLICYMAKERS

FOR PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY AND POLICY: Policymakers want to design and fund programs that truly help people gain skills and move into family-sustaining jobs.



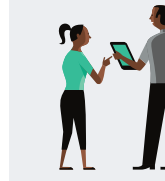
WORKFORCE PROGRAM MANAGERS

TO ADJUST PROGRAM DESIGN BASED ON OUTCOMES: Workforce program managers want to ensure their services are effective and working well with other programs in which their population participates.



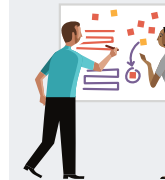
COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES

FOR BENCHMARKING AND IMPROVEMENT: Colleges and universities want to compare performance with other colleges, determine if they are meeting legally mandated benchmarks, and better serve their students.



PARENTS and STUDENTS

TO SUPPORT INFORMED DECISION-MAKING: Parents and students want to understand their choices going into and progressing through college, as well as the likelihood of receiving better jobs and wages after they graduate.



RESEARCHERS

FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS: Researchers want to know what types of services are most effective for helping individuals, especially from disadvantaged populations, earn credentials and obtain employment.