



Henry McMaster
Governor

SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Harry M. Lightsey III
Secretary

February 22, 2022

The Honorable William M. Hixon
Legislative Oversight Committee
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Representative Hixon:

Thank you for your letter dated February 11, 2022, seeking answers to questions about the workforce ecosystem and how agencies in that ecosystem share information.

The purpose of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) is to engage in discussions, collaboration, and information sharing concerning the state's ability to prepare and train workers to meet current and future workforce needs. To that end, CCWD member agencies collect various types of information, and the ability to share that information depends on the type and sensitivity of the data collected. Much of the data is publicly available, but can be difficult to access because it is not stored and maintained in a central location.

Our responses follow your questions restated in bold below.

1). How could the statistics and visuals identified be utilized by the CCWD?

This information would assist the CCWD in providing evidence-based recommendations to improve workforce outcomes for all citizens and business in South Carolina. If information can be compiled safely by eliminating personal details and made available on an aggregate and anonymized basis, CCWD would be able to fulfill statutory mandates to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding programmatic improvements and other matters that the individual agencies do not currently have the authority to implement and for which legislation is required.¹

¹ See S.C. Code §§ 13-1-2030(B)(1)(b) and (c) to “make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning matters related to workforce development that exceed the council members’ agencies’ scope of authority to implement and legislation is required” and to “recommend . . . programs intended to increase student access to and incentivize workforce training within state training programs or through programs offered by businesses through scholarships, grants, loans, tax credits, or other programs documented to be effective in addressing current and future workforce needs”

2). Based on CCWD's knowledge of different information maintained by individual agencies that comprise CCWD, could the statistics and visuals be produced if all agencies provided information they maintain?

Yes, the information currently exists to produce the statistics and visuals that could answer questions provided by the committee. The CCWD would need to engage, contract with, and receive assistance from Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) because RFA maintains the infrastructure and expertise to safely and correctly produce all responses in an aggregate manner.

3). Are CCWD entities willing to obtain and provide applicable information to the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office so the statistics and visuals could be provided to members in an aggregated manner?

Commerce will be glad to provide publicly announced jobs and information as requested. As chair of the CCWD, I cannot speak for each member agency because the agencies retain full control of the personal and other data they collect and must ensure compliance with all state and federal privacy, security, and data laws and regulations with regard to the use of that data. However, I can affirm that all CCWD member agencies are committed to improving the workforce ecosystem for their constituents and all South Carolina citizens as reflected in the attached responses from the agencies named in your letter.

We look forward to being with you on February 28, 2022.

Sincerely,



Harry M. Lightsey III

HML/km/vw

Attachment

House Oversight Request for Information re: Data Sharing

Question 3:

Are CCWD entities willing to obtain and provide applicable information to the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office so the statistics and visuals could be provided to members in an aggregated manner?

Responses from Named Sister-Agencies:

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education – Rusty L. Monhollon, Ph.D.

The Commission on Higher Education wholly supports providing data to RFA, and could make the data available as we can update and enhance our current MOU with RFA. We would expect the sharing of data would flow both ways, The CHE would like to leverage its participation by also receiving matching data through RFA from DOE and DEW to facilitate our data dashboard and reporting.

South Carolina Technical College System – Dr. Tim Hardee

The SC Technical College System currently has an MOA with RFA to provide available data for reporting purposes. Available data can be provided upon request per the guidelines outlined in the MOA.

South Carolina Department of Education – Molly Spearman

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) supports providing data to RFA. Our data collection periods include reports at the 45th, 135th, and 180th day of school. The SCDE and RFA can determine through the MOU data points that are needed at each collection period.

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce – Dan Ellzey

The Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) is willing to provide the necessary agency data to RFA to support creating the requested statistics/visuals. The majority of information needed from DEW already resides within RFA's longitudinal database.

DEW has had a data sharing agreement in place with RFA (and its predecessor) since 2011. DEW currently provides RFA with individual wage records of all employees who work for businesses that are covered under the unemployment insurance (UI) laws of the state. DEW provides updated wage records to RFA annually, and the most recent submission was in December 2021.

Federal regulations prohibit DEW from disclosing individual UI data that would reveal someone's identity unless the disclosure falls under a narrow exception. One of those exceptions allows DEW to disclose individual UI data to a state agency like RFA. An entity DEW discloses individual UI data to is then prohibited, with limited exceptions, from redisclosing that individual data. As a result, DEW's data sharing agreement with RFA allows for the use of the UI Wage records for research purposes but does not allow for the dissemination of individual-level information. Specifically, "only aggregate information will be provided by RFA to other organizations or individuals. The aggregation will be such as to preclude anyone from deducing

individual information from the aggregation or from the aggregation and publicly available information.” The agreement also requires RFA to secure written permission from DEW to disseminate or otherwise disclose aggregate data.

In order for DEW data to be utilized in regards to the four statistics/visuals, it will be necessary for RFA to follow the existing procedure it has with DEW regarding agency permission, aggregate information only, etc. Each of the requested statistics/visuals and the role of DEW’s data is discussed in more detail below.

I. Percentage of in-state students graduating from South Carolina colleges and universities that are employed in South Carolina five years after graduation.

- a. Records of students graduating from SC colleges and universities would need to be provided to RFA by the appropriate party (Commission on Higher Education, individual institutions, etc.). Once those records are obtained, RFA can cross match the graduate information against DEW wage records to determine the percent that are employed in South Carolina five years after graduation. This information could then be released in aggregate form.
- b. While the UI wage records cover a large percent of the employment in the state, they do not include employment from the federal government, military, self-employment, work as an independent contractor, or work done for a company located outside of South Carolina.

II. Percentage of individuals that obtain a ManuFirstSC certificate that are employed in manufacturing one year after graduation and three years after graduation.

- a. RFA would need to get information on who obtains a ManuFirstSC certificate from the appropriate party. RFA currently has wage record information from DEW that could be matched with ManuFirstSC data to answer this question. Once those records are obtained, RFA can cross match the information against DEW wage records to determine the percent that are employed in South Carolina one and three years after graduation. This information could then be released in aggregate form.
- b. The current extract provided to RFA does not include the NAICS code of the employer. This information can be provided going forward and a one-time extract of all employer accounts and industry codes could be provided to RFA to add to their existing information.
 - i. While the wage records could provide the industry of the employer for which the individual is employed, state law does not currently require businesses to report occupation information within their quarterly reports. So, while it would be possible to tell if the individual were working in a business that is in the manufacturing industry, it would not be possible to determine (using DEW wage records) if the individual was employed in a manufacturing occupation. According to national estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly half of all individuals who work within

the manufacturing industry work in “non-production” occupations including: transportation, management, engineering, etc.

- III. Interactive map with inbound/outbound migration, including inbound income per capita; outbound income per capita, and non-migrant income per capita for the following: a. Statewide b. By county c. By school district d. By educational institution that receives funding from the General Assembly.**
- a. DEW wage records are not sufficient to answer these questions. The most suitable resource for answering these types of questions would be surveys from the U.S. Census Bureau using publicly available data. While this information may be available at the state level using Census surveys, it is unlikely that information at the county, school district, or educational institution would be available.
 - b. If there is a question regarding how many graduates from a particular educational institution are found in the state wage records after graduation, that could be accomplished in the same manner as described in number I, above.
- IV. Average starting wage for high school graduates, technical school graduates, and four-year degree graduates, by major, four years after graduation. Please provide this information by U.S. BEA and NAICS codes at the sector and sub sector level.**
- a. Graduate information, including major, from the Department of Education, Technical Colleges, individual institutions, and/or Commission on Higher Education would need to be submitted to RFA to be able to complete this request.
 - b. DEW wage records already housed at RFA can be used to answer these questions. However, if individuals work for the federal government, military, out-of-state, or are self-employed/independent contractor/gig worker, they will not necessarily be found in the records. Additionally, individuals may have more than one job in the given quarter, so assumptions would need to be made on how to combine data potentially across different industries.