"It can't be done" - How Maryland went from "no" to "yes" on collecting unit record noncredit data

SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference

August 9, 2022 4:15 - 5:00 PM White River D

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Introductions and Session Plan

Dr. Ann Kellogg - Director of Reporting Services
Maryland Higher Education Commission and Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center

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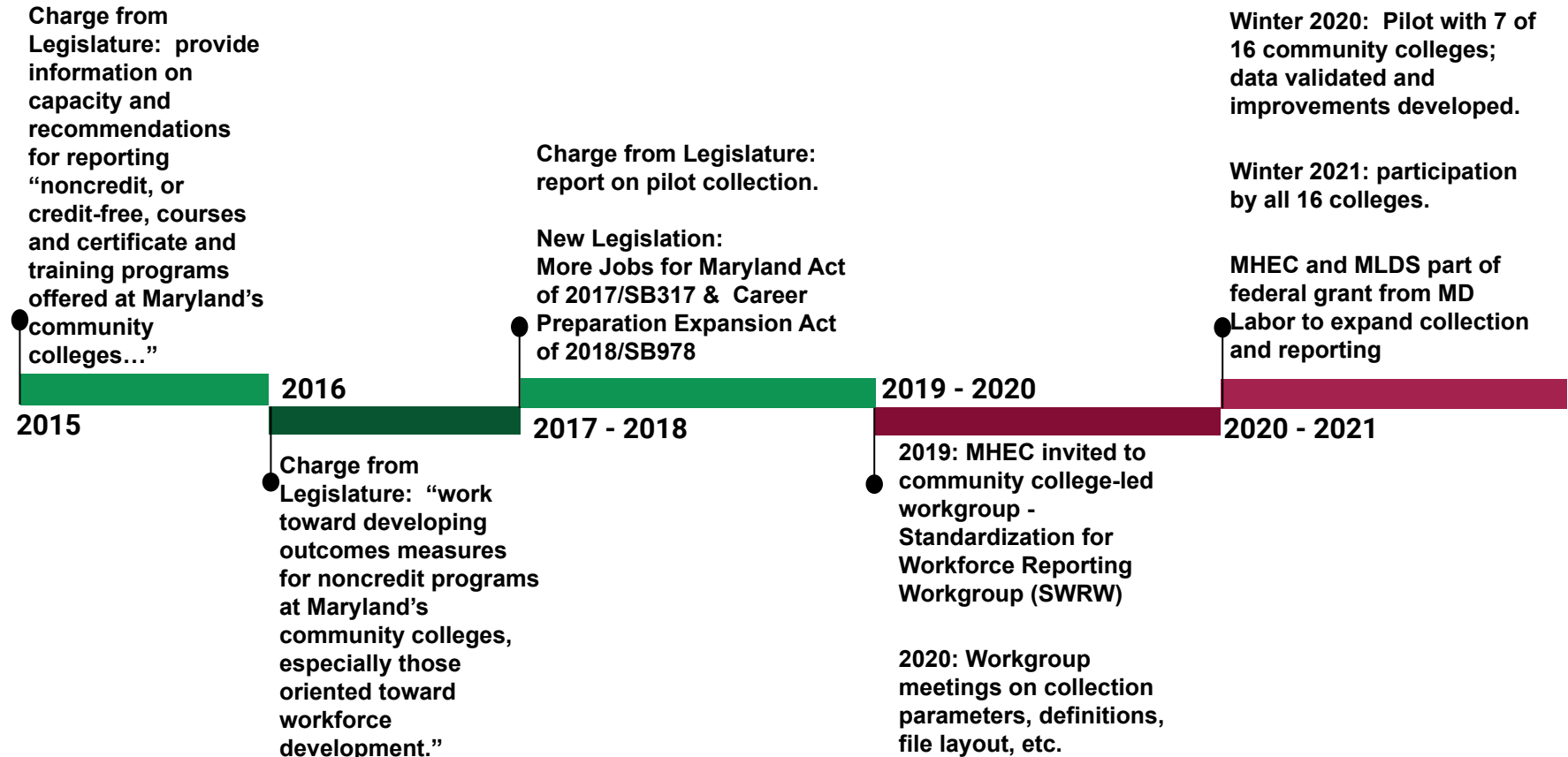Maryland Higher Education Commission

I. Background and impetus in development of Noncredit Workforce Completer System (NWCS)
II. Factors affecting process and progress
III. Collection review and highlights
IV. Next steps
V. Questions

Background: Stakeholders

- **Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)** is the State of Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities and for-profit career schools. MHEC also administers over 20 state financial aid programs that affect students on a statewide basis. Maryland has 16 public community colleges, 13 public four-year institutions, 13 state-aided independent institutions and eight private institutions as well as over 150 for-profit career schools.
- **Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center** is an independent state agency that develops and maintains a data system containing student and workforce data from all levels of public education and the State's workforce to generate timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the State's education system and guide decision makers at all levels.
- **Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC)** is a membership organization representing 16 community colleges. With an active President's Council and Affinity Groups, it advocates for its members on all matters affecting community colleges in the State.

Key timeline: 2015 to 2021

Charge from Legislature: provide information on capacity and recommendations for reporting "noncredit, or credit-free, courses and certificate and training programs offered at Maryland's community colleges…"

Winter 2020: Pilot with 7 of 16 community colleges; data validated and improvements developed.

Charge from Legislature: report on pilot collection.

New Legislation: More Jobs for Maryland Act of 2017/SB317 & Career Preparation Expansion Act of 2018/SB978

Winter 2021: participation by all 16 colleges.

MHEC and MLDS part of federal grant from MD Labor to expand collection and reporting

2019 - 2020

2015

2016

2017 - 2018

2020 - 2021

Charge from Legislature: "work toward developing outcomes measures for noncredit programs at Maryland's community colleges, especially those oriented toward workforce development."

2019: MHEC invited to community college-led workgroup - Standardization for Workforce Reporting Workgroup (SWRW)

2020: Workgroup meetings on collection parameters, definitions, file layout, etc.

2015 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) Charge

Charge: The committees are interested in the noncredit, or credit-free, courses and certificate and training programs offered at Maryland's community colleges, and having this information available in a single comprehensive report. The report should include enrollment, program completion outcomes, certificates or other equivalent awards earned by type, employment status of graduates, and wage gains for graduates….MHEC should also recommend new metrics and any changes to State programs to benefit nontraditional students.

<u>Response Summary</u>: **No.** *Collecting noncredit data will be very difficult and is not recommended. If noncredit data is to be collected, the focus should be on completion of courses or sequences preparing students for licensure and certification. Noncredit programs are, by their nature, highly unregulated. The State should offer incentives for students to complete these programs in the form of financial aid and the State should require licensing data to be provided to MHEC.*

2016 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) Charge

Charge: The committees are interested in the Maryland Higher Education Commission's (MHEC) work toward developing more outcomes measures for noncredit programs at Maryland's community colleges, especially those oriented toward workforce development. MHEC should submit a report on what new data it will collect, how often, and what assistance it may need from other public or private agencies to provide better information so that this new data may be included in the Maryland Longitudinal Data System.

Response Summary: **Maybe?** *MHEC will begin a pilot, unit-record completer collection in 2017. Upon further investigation, the recommendation to have licensure data provided to MHEC is unwise. MHEC recommends, instead, that wage data be used to measure outcomes and that the wage analysis be completed by MLDS.*

2017 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) Charge

Charge: The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has informed the budget committees that it is piloting a new data collection effort regarding completion in noncredit workforce training programs in fiscal 2016. The committees request MHEC summarize the data that is received and explain how MHEC and the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center are working together to determine the effectiveness of noncredit sequences in meeting the State's workforce needs.

<u>**Response Summary:**</u> **Yes?** *MHEC faced barriers to implementing the pilot collection and did not follow through with the collection. The two primary barriers were: 1) standard definitions and reporting requirements could not be established in a timely manner such that the community colleges felt prepared to submit data and 2) no standard method for classifying continuing education sequences exists that parallels the established classification methods used for for-credit education. Work will continue into 2018.*

Legislature and Governor

- **Key legislation includes**
  - **More Jobs for Maryland Act (MJFM) of 2017 (SB317)**
    - Established the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship
    - [Establish annual income earnings goals](#) for high school graduates who have not earned at least a two-year college degree by Age 25
  - **Career Preparation Expansion Act (CPEA) of 2018 (SB978)**
    - Codified and expanded the collection and sharing of data from nationally recognized industry certifiers, postsecondary vocational certificates and licenses (credit and noncredit), and state business licenses
    - Required [annual reporting](#) on workforce outcomes for high school graduates
- **Reporting requirements**
  - Budget Hearings: 2015, 2016, and 2017

Factors under agency's "control"

- Strong relationships with statewide stakeholders, especially the community colleges
- Role played once invited to the statewide workgroup
- "Carrot" of advancing completer data to the MLDS for labor market outcomes and other longitudinal analysis
- Authority to advance statewide metrics and definitions
- Legitimacy to legislature and other agencies (e.g., MD Labor) seeking to collect these data from the institutions
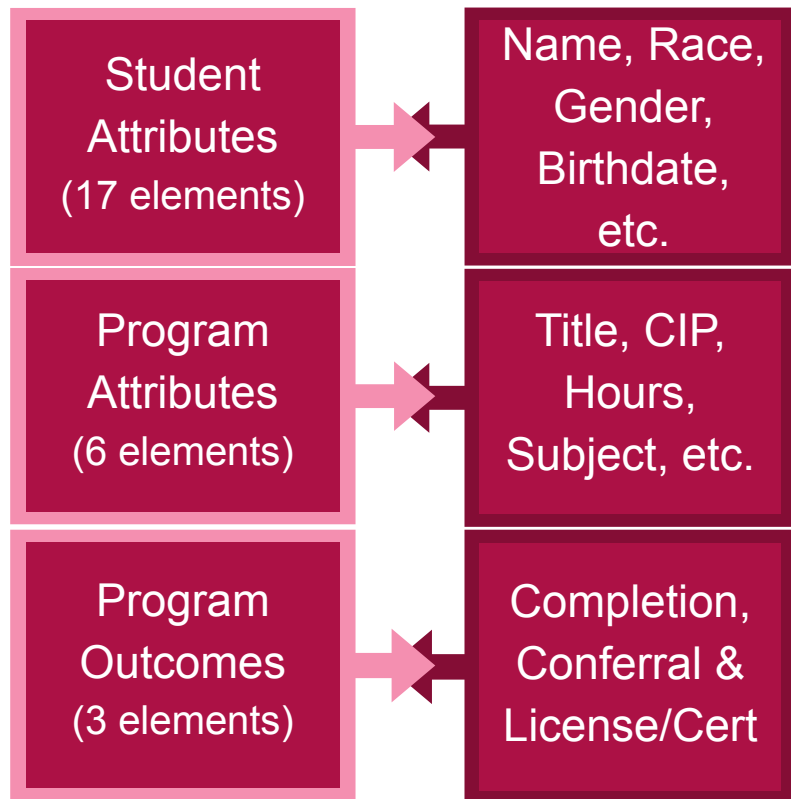
Factors outside agency control

- Limited resources and time
- Not enough knowledge of data systems on campuses to dictate collection parameters without campus partners
- Possible mistrust with colleges, especially noncredit staff who we had not developed relationships with
- Other state agencies wanting same data with competing agenda (Labor)
- Reality that if we didn't do something, the legislature might mandate more
- Unknown quality of data for the collection

Review collection

The Noncredit Workforce Completers System captures students who complete a noncredit workforce training program at any time during the collection year. Workforce training completers are those students who have successfully completed a course or series of courses that qualifies students for identifiable occupations or that provides a comprehensive body of knowledge leading to career advancement.

- Able to use course parameters tied to existing regulation of noncredit courses to help guide collection (e.g., MHEC's approval and management of courses or sequences)
- Limited to community colleges (for now)

Noncredit Workforce Completer System (NWCS)

Student Attributes (17 elements) → Name, Race, Gender, Birthdate, etc.

Program Attributes (6 elements) → Title, CIP, Hours, Subject, etc.

Program Outcomes (3 elements) → Completion, Conferral & License/Cert

Data Collection Materials & *Data Cookbook*

- File Layout Specifications (29 elements)
- Guidance for Submission
- Course or Sequence Type Codes

*One positive outcome from the process of developing and implementing this collection is that it provides a **standard for all institutions** to use for reporting on this data . . . which allows . . . institutions to share this data amongst ourselves and for the **college presidents to see how other institutions are doing** with completers of CE programs.*

Getting from "no" to "yes" . . . Social Security Number

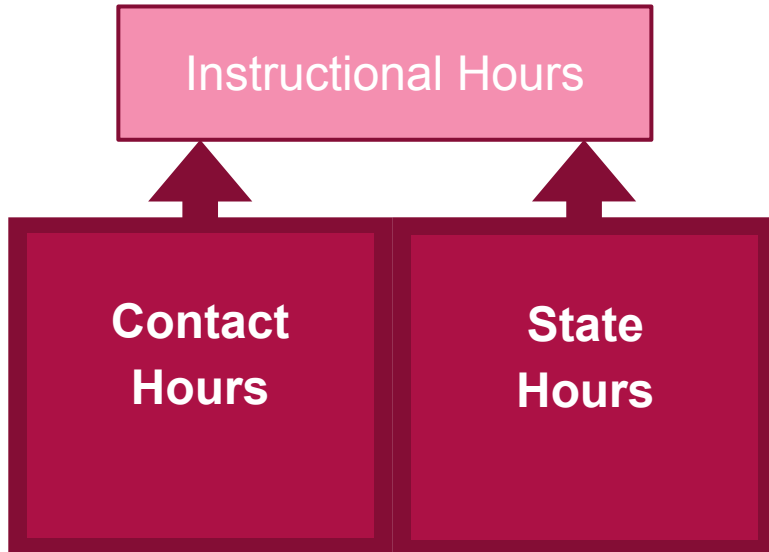**SSN** → **Persistent Identifier + PII String**
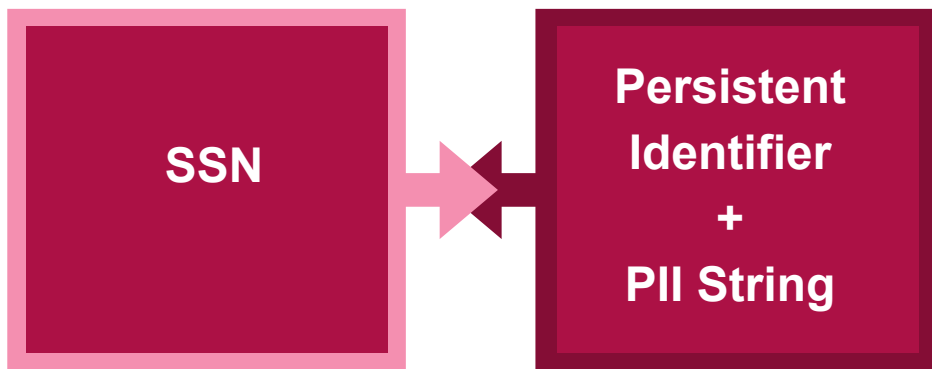
Where possible, offer options or at least options to initiate the new collection

- Preferred: Social Security Number
- Accepted: Persistent Identifier with PII String

*Noncredit data can take various forms at various institutions, unless you have some sort of **consistency in in your data fields** across institutions, this will be a very difficult project to implement.*

Getting from "no" to "yes" . . .   Instructional Hours

Instructional Hours

↑   ↑

Contact Hours   **State Hours**

*The fact that there are **several different ways to complete a program** make it difficult to count instructional hours.*
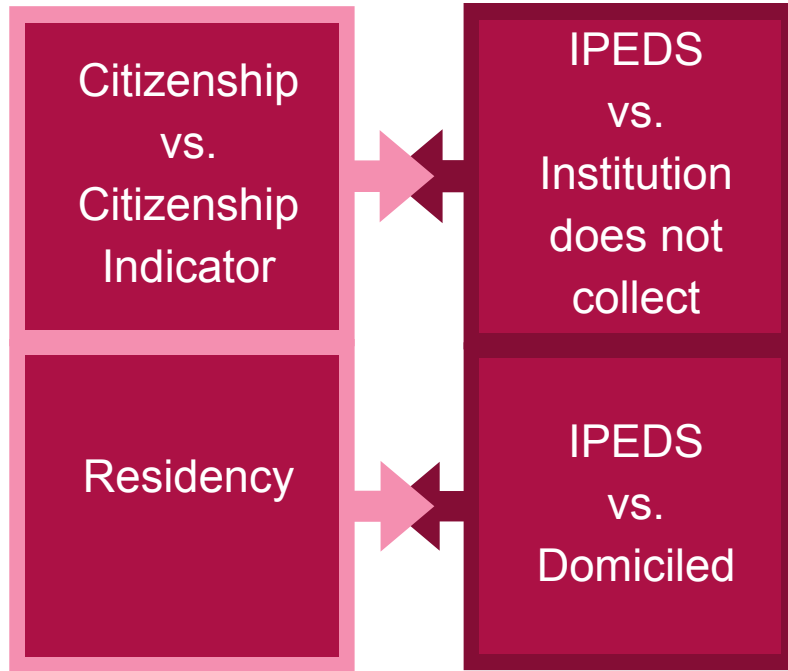
Where there is variation, who is best positioned to normalize the data?

- Needed: Instructional Hours
- Included: Hours Types

*Projects like these don't go smoothly, or have as good outcomes, without **good partnerships**.*

Getting from "no" to "yes" . . . Citizenship & Residency

| Citizenship vs. Citizenship Indicator	→	IPEDS vs. Institution does not collect
Residency	→	IPEDS vs. Domiciled

Accept that noncredit does not conform to IPEDS

- Construct new data elements to isolate definitional variation
- Modify definitions of existing data elements

. . .the most difficult part of collecting the data is that existing reporting tools (ERPs) and **processes are developed with a credit student and schedule** *in mind.*

Getting from "no" to "yes" . . .   Cannot Report for Pilot

Race	→	Blank Allowed
CIP Code	→	88.88 Cannot Report During Pilot
Zip Code	→	00000 if Unknown
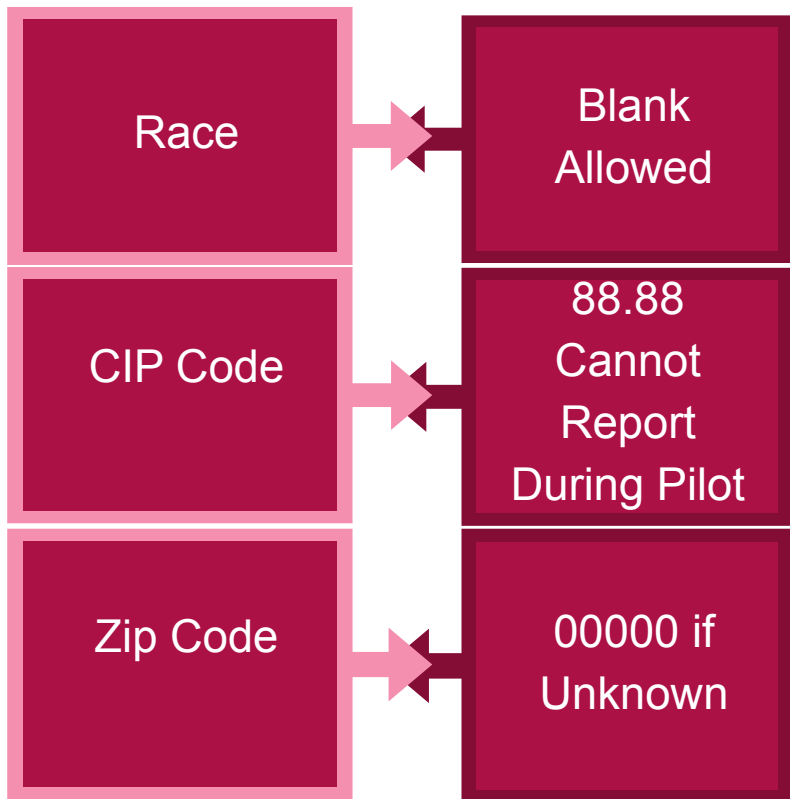
Encourage participation while data are still a work in progress

- Temporary coding schemes
- Phased-in compliance
- Select elements that must report

*We may work in different organizations but we **meet with a common goal**, each person being able to **leverage knowledge** provided by another to provide the best possible result.*

Key steps in getting from "no" to "yes" . . .

| Population Parameters	Shared Vocabulary	Pilot Phases	Data Quality Standards	Data Utility
• Clear guidance on *who* belongs in the file • Population shared common outcomes characteristics	• Workgroups with representatives from small, medium, and large institutions • Institutional expertise and language • Single source of documentation: Data Cookbook	• Pilot 1 - optional but required commitment from at least half of institutions • Pilot 2 - all institutions required • Extended timelines for submissions	• Rules for data quality jointly developed	• Demonstrated pilot data could be linked to MLDS workforce data

*Establishing **data definitions** was very important from the start.*

*Being able to have **representatives from a few colleges** conduct work on behalf of all the colleges made this more manageable.*

Future directions . . . The Institution's Perspective

Allegany College of Maryland

Anne Arundel Community College

Baltimore City Community College

Carroll Community College

Cecil College

Chesapeake College

College of Southern Maryland

Community College of Baltimore County

Frederick Community College

Garrett College

Hagerstown Community College

Harford Community College

Howard Community College

Montgomery College

Prince George's Community College

Wor-Wic Community College
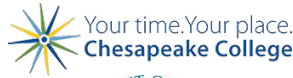
*This collection provides an opportunity to **highlight the important training** that is provided to students across the State. This could help **inform planning** for future college program development.*

*It is also very important to be able to show **how many students are completing our noncredit programs**. This is something that we have not been able to do reliably.*
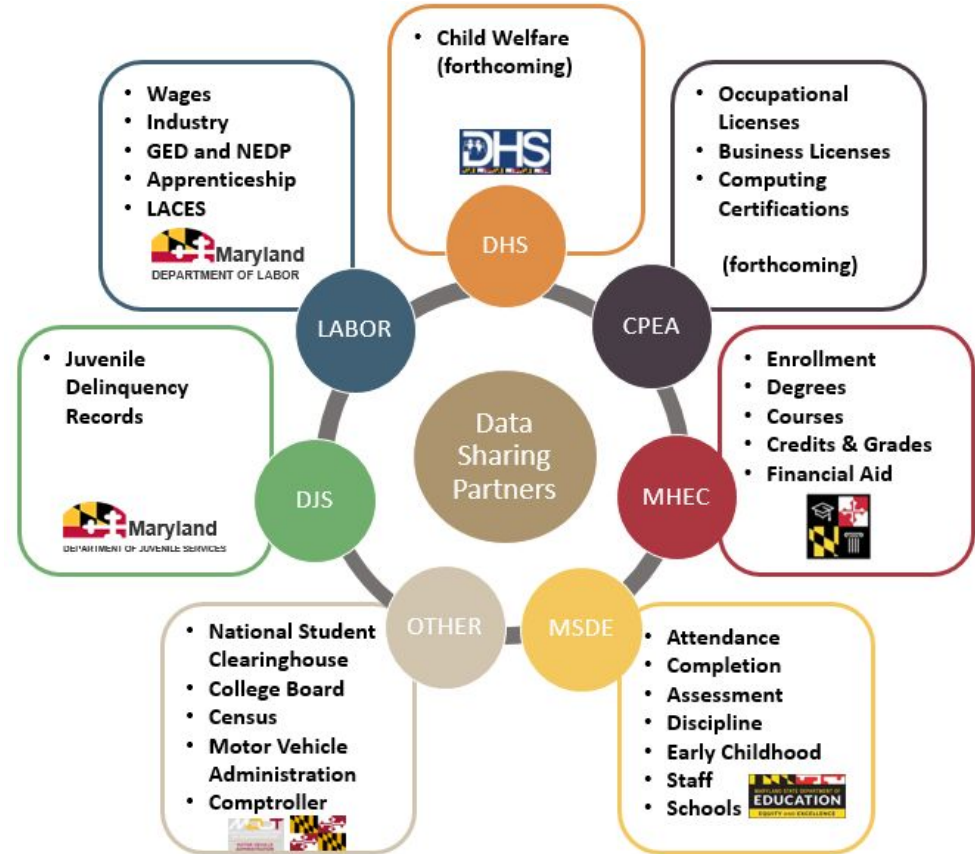
Future directions . . . MLDS Center

Cross-Agency Data Linkages

- Education & Labor Market Pipelines & Pathways
- Economic Development

*It also provides **a vehicle to see pathways** that these students choose, whether it be in an immediate career path or furthering their college education.*

http://mldscenter.maryland.gov

Future directions…MHEC - A fuller picture of the postsecondary education in Maryland

A focus on noncredit completers is the beginning.

Next up:

- Enrollments
- Financial aid
- Inclusion of Private Career Schools and Four-Year Institutions

Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) Grant partnering with MD Labor on collection of noncredit data

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

*This collection is filling a **missing part of the Community College story** (previously only the credit side was reported on).*

Questions?

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