

Developing Unified State Talent Strategies

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Moderator

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Why This Conversation Matters

Key Points:

- States are under increasing pressure to:
 - Demonstrate value of postsecondary education
 - Meet workforce demands
 - Drive economic mobility
- Yet systems remain fragmented, misaligned, difficult to navigate

Talent strategy is becoming a core part of state infrastructure

What is a State Talent Plan?



A Unified Strategy for Talent Development

- **Aligns:**
 - Higher education
 - Workforce systems
 - Economic development
- **Centers on a shared vision for:** opportunity, mobility, growth
- **Core Functions:**
 - Identify future jobs
 - Define pathways to skills
 - Align systems + capacity
 - Coordinate resources
 - Set metrics + accountability

A state talent plan aims to
**connect education
investments to real
economic outcomes**



From Plan to Governing Tool

What Effective State Talent Plans Actually Do

- Provide a clear narrative for policymakers
- Connect strategy to budgets
- Enable legislative reporting
- Track outcomes + ROI
- Reduce duplication across systems
- Improve learner and employer experience

The strongest plans are **decision-making tools**

Shared Value Across Stakeholders

Learners	Employers
Clear pathways	Strong talent pipelines
Better outcomes	Reduced skill gaps

Institutions	States
Program alignment	Economic growth
Strategic planning	Better ROI



Lessons from the Field

There is no single “right” model, but leading states share common elements.



Funding tied to
outcomes



Talent
embedded in
econ strategy



Legislated
statewide plan



Equity-
centered
design



Core Ingredients of Effective Plans

What it Takes to Get This Right

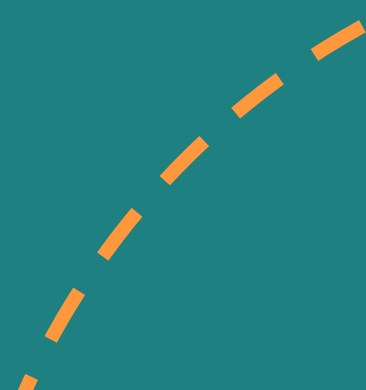
- 1 Clear Vision + Ownership**
 - Shared statewide purpose
 - Executive-level leadership

- 2 Strong Labor Market Data**
 - Integrated data systems
 - Actionable insights

- 3 Measurable Goals**
 - North Star targets
 - Aligned with funding + policy

- 4 Cross-sector Engagement**
 - Employers
 - Higher ed
 - Workforce agencies

- 5 Accountability + Use**
 - Embedded in budgeting
 - Public reporting





What This Looks Like in Practice

Bringing Talent Strategies to Life

- Examples
 - **Virginia:** Centralized data through Office of Education Economics
 - **Colorado:** Talent Pipeline Report drives budget decisions
 - **California:** “No wrong door” access to education + training
 - **Kentucky:** Aligns credentials to career mobility

States are moving from
coordination → integration → accountability



From Framework to Practice

Our Panelists:



Cheryl Rice

Vice Chancellor, Higher Education Workforce Alignment



Julie Roberts

Chief Academic Officer





Questions?

