

Postsecondary Education Shapes a Student's Future

Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) Coalition





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THE PSEO COALITION

Most jobs in the United States now require education and training beyond high school. However, a wide gap remains between students who have access to these credentials and those who do not.

The **Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) Coalition** uses data transparently so everyone — from students and families to higher education administrators and government officials — can make informed decisions about postsecondary education and career paths.

Our data allows academic advisors and counselors to work with their students to make informed choices that elevate themselves and their families long-term.

The PSEO Explorer

PSEO generates, analyzes, and shares employment data that demonstrates the value of higher education. This data is publicly available through the PSEO Explorer dashboard on the U.S. Census Bureau's website.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit lehdc.ces.census.gov/data/pseo_experimental.html.



To fulfill our mission, we collect detailed graduation data from schools, colleges, and universities in more than two dozen states and share it with the U.S. Census Bureau, which compares it to anonymized federal earnings data. Our work amplifies the value proposition of higher education to benefit our communities, states, and nation.

The work of the PSEO Coalition helps tomorrow's employees understand what they can earn if they pursue specific degrees in various fields and equips them with tools to advocate for themselves when they enter the workforce.

Our efforts empower policy choices that lead to less student debt and more graduates with in-demand skills.

More PSEO Resources

The toolkit is designed to provide a detailed description of the PSEO Coalition, the PSEO Explorer, and available resources that can help highlight the impact of higher education.



For more information, scan the QR code or visit <https://postsecondaryemploymentoutcomes.org/>.

WHO WE ARE

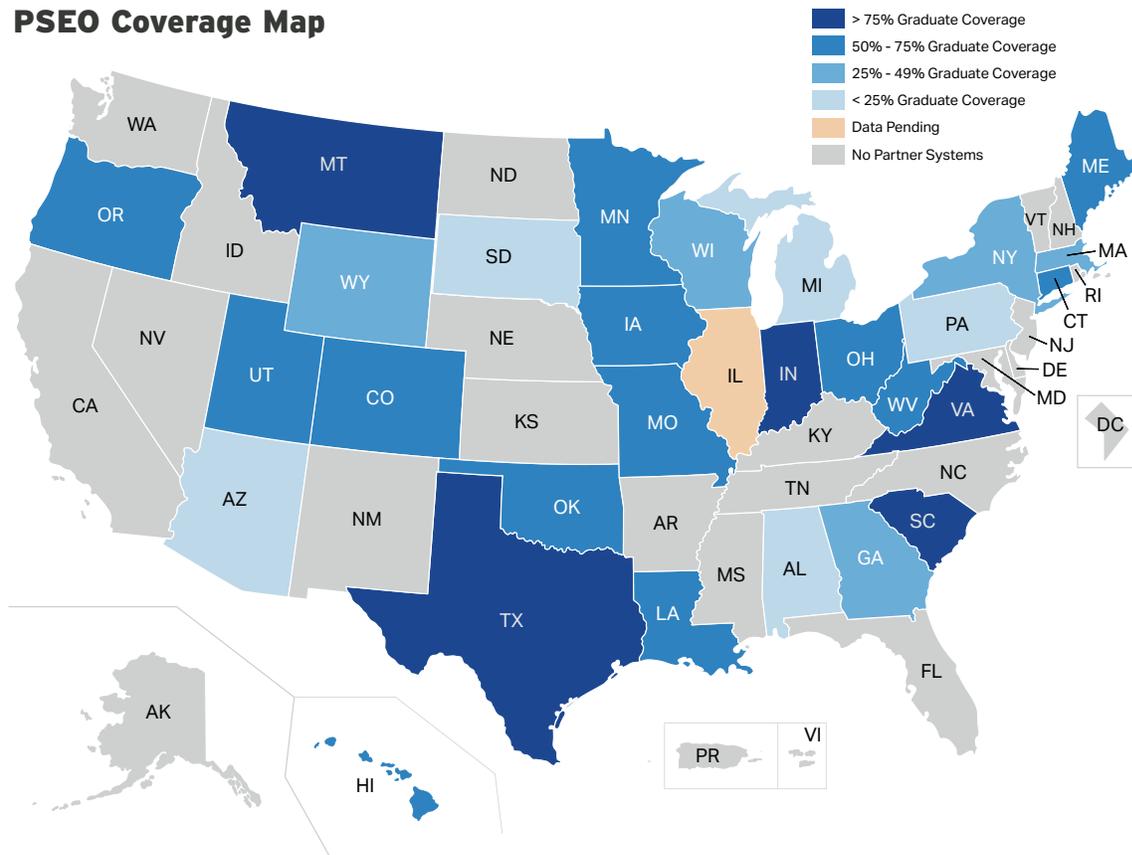
The PSEO Coalition includes leaders from agencies, systems, and institutions across 30 states.

Our efforts began at the University of Texas System in 2016 and have grown to include 800-plus higher education institutions in our member states — with more joining each year.

Our shared goal is to use data to demonstrate the impact of higher education for students, employers, and the economy. By doing so, we empower those with a stake in the success of our students to make informed decisions. By continually sharing best practices and information with one another, we can reimagine how to educate students most effectively and expand opportunities.

We work closely with the U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, which collects labor market statistics on employment, earnings, and job creation, covering more than 96% of the U.S. workforce.

PSEO Coverage Map



**View Appendix A for a list of Coalition member states. Map updated March 2024.*

WHAT WE DO

Higher education leaders and state officials can set successful strategic policies only when they have access to detailed, reliable, and actionable data.

The Inputs

- The PSEO Coalition's members submit comprehensive **graduation data** to the U.S. Census Bureau on every student who earns a degree or credential including:
 - Date of birth
 - Graduation year
 - Social security number
 - Degree, credential, or certification earned
 - Major or discipline
- The U.S. Census Bureau separately collects **Quarterly Workforce Indicators and Unemployment Insurance earnings data** from 47 states that reflect the post-graduation earnings of degree recipients.

The Outputs

- The U.S. Census Bureau compares and combines the datasets to **identify postsecondary earnings levels**. This highlights direct links between what students study, where they study, when they graduate or earn their certification — and what they're projected to earn over the next decade.
- Trends are sortable and searchable within the **PSEO Explorer**, a free online dashboard that provides visualizations of the data, including:
 - Earnings 1, 5, and 10 years post-graduation
 - Earnings levels for the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile
 - Type of industry of employment post-graduation
 - Geographic locations where students work post-graduation
- **Student information is completely anonymous.** Student privacy is rigorously protected by removing all identifying information and instead applying a unique identifier.

Understanding Inequities

By expanding employment data to include information about race, ethnicity, and gender, the PSEO Coalition can help stakeholders better understand deeply entrenched trends among different populations.

The PSEO Coalition is addressing these trends with experts such as Dr. Lois Joy at the nonprofit Jobs for the Future. Dr. Joy has researched community college technology internships and short-term IT credentials as a pathway into tech careers, with a focus on gender and racial structural barriers.

The PSEO Coalition is also exploring research collaborations with the U.S. Census Bureau, similar to a 2023 paper on *The Gender Pay Gap and its Determinants across the Human Capital Distribution*, which examined gender pay gaps across education credentials for 15 years after graduation.

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

Understanding the true value of higher education.

For generations, a compact has existed between higher education and American families. It promised that a college degree or professional credential would increase opportunities, upward mobility, and long-term prosperity.

Sadly, this compact is now in jeopardy because of the rising costs of education, a higher cost of living for students, and declining perceptions of the value of higher education. Anyone connected to higher education has heard the questions: *Do I need a degree? Will it actually increase my salary? How much does it really cost to go to college? When will I finally pay off my debt?*

These questions are understandable. At the same time, however, postsecondary education has become even more essential for the workforce, including entry-level positions in many fields.

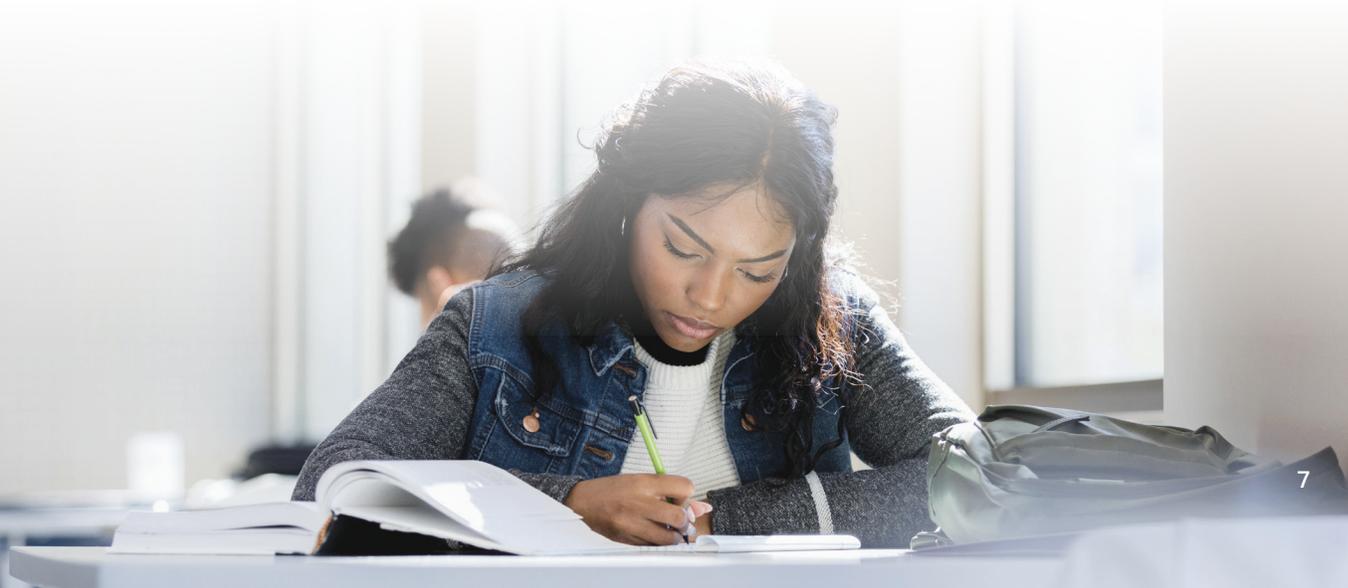
In this environment, it's more vital than ever for students and parents, elected officials, employers, policymakers, and the media to understand the true costs and benefits of postsecondary credentials.

Common Misperceptions

While 70% of jobs by 2027 will require education beyond high school, attitudes toward higher education are falling short.



High school students and their parents overestimate the cost of higher education by **\$10K**



WHO WE ARE REACHING

The PSEO Coalition's data has helped higher education leadership develop dashboards, infographics, and reports that communicate the value of a college degree to key stakeholders.

This includes:

- Prospective college students and their parents
- Institutional leadership
- Academic faculty
- Academic advisors and career services
- Policymakers and government officials
- Employers
- Media
- Alumni and donors

The PSEO Explorer can answer key questions for:

Students and Families:

- How much money will I make after I graduate?
- Will I find work nearby, or should I consider moving to another state?
- Which industries are hiring the most people?

States:

- Are graduates staying or leaving the state?
- Do we get graduates from other states?
- What degrees do we need more of? Less of?
- What industries are employing our students?
- What are our state's biggest workforce needs?

Business and Industry:

- What are new graduates being paid in other states or industries?
- What institutions or states may be a useful source of an educated workforce?

Postsecondary Institutions:

- Do our students graduate with no debt or manageable debt?
- How can we assist budding teachers, social workers, and others entering lower-paying but socially impactful jobs?
- Do our students have equitable outcomes?
- Do our graduates meet our state's needs?
- What are the employment outcomes of our students?
- Are they better off with their degree?
- How much are they earning?
- Are they finding work?





/// As the lead of the PSEO Coalition, I've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of collaboration between higher education professionals and the U.S. Census Bureau. Our united efforts are not just about charting clear outcomes; they're a testament to the intrinsic value of higher education in shaping futures. Together, we're illuminating the pathways that lead students to success, demonstrating the undeniable worth of higher education through concrete, data-driven outcomes."

– **David Troutman, Ph.D.**

Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

WHAT IS NEXT?

In the coming years, we aim to:

- Expand membership to more than 40 states and 1,100 institutions.
- Begin to separate earnings data by race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Link graduation data with anonymized IRS 1040 and 1099 tax returns to include even more graduates who may not be found in the unemployment insurance wage record.
- Continually develop new priorities to expand the dataset and make it even more useful.
- Meet quarterly with U.S. Census Bureau partners to discuss updates, potential research projects, and other areas of collaboration.
- Help states improve their postsecondary education-to-employment data systems.



APPENDIX A

PSEO Coalition Membership*

Alabama

University of Alabama System

Arizona

Arizona Board of Regents

Colorado

Colorado Department of Higher Education

Connecticut

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

Georgia

University System of Georgia

Hawaii

University of Hawaii System

Illinois

Illinois Board of Higher Education (Pending)

Indiana

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Iowa

Iowa Board of Regents
Iowa Community Colleges

Louisiana

Louisiana Board of Regents

Maine

Maine Community College System
University of Maine System

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Michigan

Institute for Research on Innovation and Science (University of Michigan - Ann Arbor)

Minnesota

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Missouri

Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

Montana

Montana University System

New York

The State University of New York
The City University of New York

Ohio

Ohio Department of Higher Education

Oklahoma

Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education

Oregon

Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania State University

South Carolina

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Texas

University of Texas System; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Utah

Utah System of Higher Education
Western Governors University

Virginia

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

West Virginia

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Wisconsin

Institute for Research on Innovation and Science (University of Wisconsin - Madison)

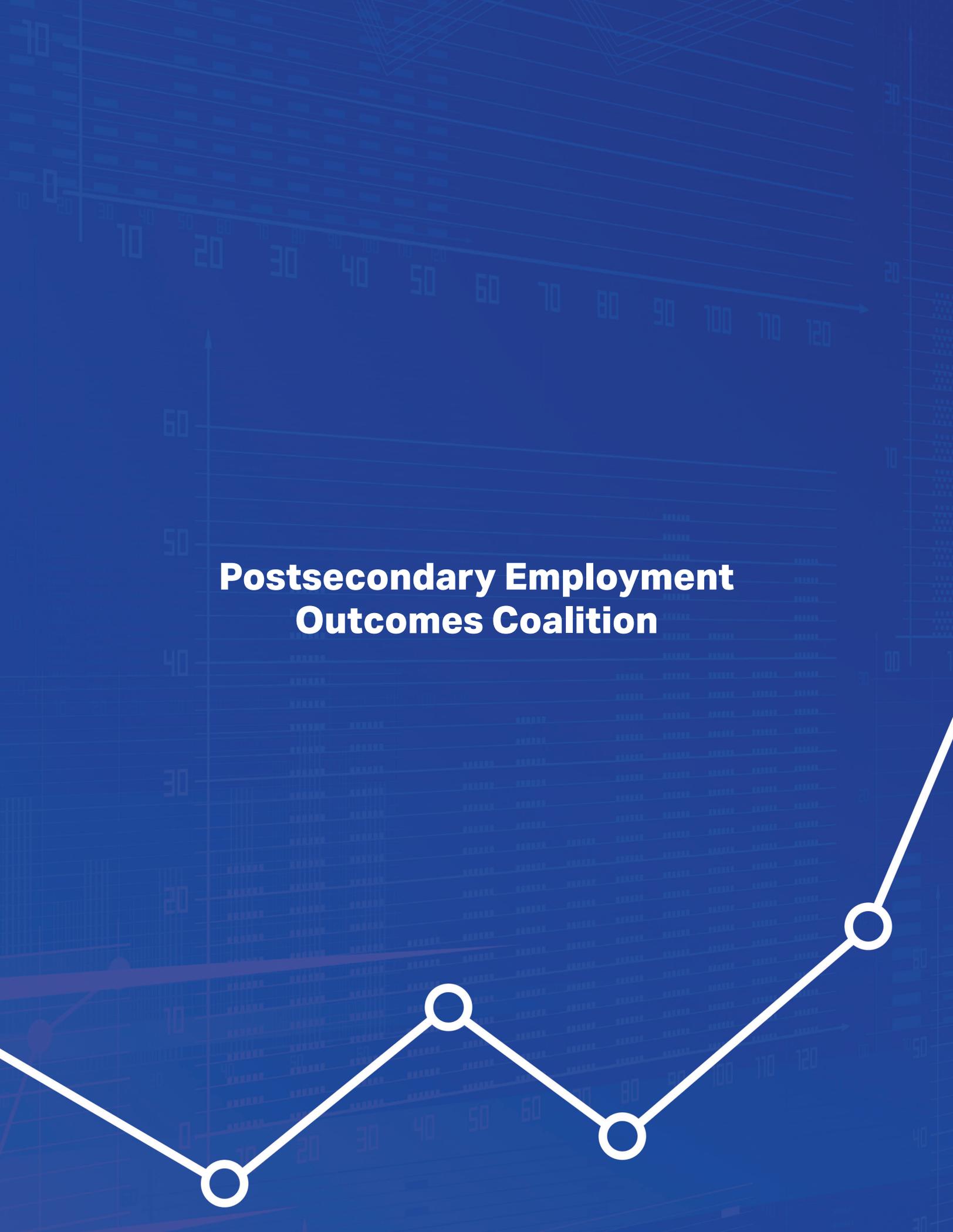
Wyoming

Wyoming Community Colleges

*List updated March 2024.

Join the PSEO Coalition today!

Interested in becoming a member? Email David Troutman at david.troutman@highered.texas.gov for more information.



Postsecondary Employment Outcomes Coalition