Planning A Registry

The planning process is a critical first step to developing your registry. Be thorough and think creatively. In addition to the standard planning processes (e.g., the creation of your registry's mission and vision statement and short- and long-term goals), you should address the following questions during the planning process.

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Think about these questions in planning a new registry or revising your existing registry.

1. What role do registries play within state career development systems? How can registries support other state-level quality initiatives?

2. Who should we include in the planning process?

3. Where should the state registry be housed?

4. How do we determine the target population for our registry?

5. How do we determine if registry participation should be required or optional?

6. How do we determine career lattice levels?

7. How do we start to develop the database system?

8. How do we determine which data fields to collect?

9. How do we develop our enrollment forms/applications?

10. How do we determine registry start-up costs?

11. What are the potential barriers?

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1. **What role do registries play within state career development systems? How can registries support other state-level quality initiatives?**

   Registries have the capacity to either implement or support the key elements of state career development systems. A listing of key components of state career development systems and references to how registries might be involved follows.

State Career Development System Elements	Key Components	Potential for Registry Involvement
Access and Outreach	Practitioner Registry	Core Registry Function
	Trainer Registry	Core Registry Function
	Training Calendar	Registries can inform professionals' training choices by linking training information to a training calendar.
	Career Advising	Registries can support professionals in assessing their current qualifications via placement on a career lattice
Quality Assurance	Quality Rating System	Registries can provide education and training information about staff members who work in programs participating in Quality Rating Systems.
	Trainer Approval	Registries can collect trainer and training information to inform the training approval process.
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	Evaluations	Registry data can contribute to evaluation data on thresholds of education that impact quality care and education.
Qualifications, Credentials, and Pathways	Pre-service Requirements	Registries can track, and document minimum qualifications staff are required to have prior to assuming their position, supporting licensing and other regulatory requirements.
	Continuing Educations Requirements	Registries can track and document ongoing/in-service training that staff is required to obtain to remain in their position, supporting licensing and other regulatory requirements.
	Credentials	Registries can document progress and completion of a defined set of requirements set forth by the grantor of a credential or may be responsible for credential awarding and certification.
	Career Lattice	Registries often maintain the state career lattice to recognize professionals' achievement and levels of mastery.

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Qualifications, Credentials, and Pathways (cont'd)	Articulation	Registries track professionals' education history and can analyze trends/patterns that can inform articulation discussions. Consistent and categorized information on formal education and training content can be used to illustrate capacity issues for higher education institutions and can inform transfer issues.
Core Professional Knowledge	Core Knowledge/Core Competencies	Registries can track training and education information in core knowledge areas and/or competencies.
	Early Learning Guidelines	Registries can track training and education information by early learning guideline domain areas and can link the domains to core knowledge/competencies.
Financing and Compensation	Compensation/ Retention Initiatives and Other Incentives	Registries can provide data about professionals' education attainment to support the implementation of initiatives that link increases in qualifications to increases in compensation and/or other wage supplements or bonuses.
	Scholarships	Registries can provide data about professionals' education attainment to support the implementation of scholarship initiatives.
	Public Policy	Registries can provide data to inform workforce planning efforts and development of workforce briefs and reports.

2. Who should we include in the planning process?

The best way to ensure that the planning process is inclusive is to develop an action plan identifying the various stakeholder groups and potential representatives. Think creatively about opportunities to gather feedback at the local level in addition to the larger planning meetings. For example, consider partnering with other organizations like professional associations and present about the registry planning process at the local affiliate chapter meetings. Definitely, include representatives from potential target population(s) in order to increase ownership in the registry. In addition, involve representatives from other quality initiatives in the state so that they can help identify potential data partnerships. For example, if the state is working on a quality rating system, the state registry could serve as the mechanism to collect the teacher and director education and training data. The key is to involve partners early in the process so that they have ownership in the process and ultimately in the registry.

Once you develop your list of stakeholders, review the following list of potential partners/organizations that other states have recruited for their planning process to make sure did not miss any potential participants.

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- State Department (e.g., State Child Care Administrator, Licensing, Health, Social Services, Education, Labor)
- Elected Officials
- Professionals Who Work in Programs That Provide Direct Care to Children (center-based, home-based, Head Start, Early Head Start)
- Early Childhood Collaborative Groups
- Resource and Referral
- Higher Education
- Extension
- Other Quality Initiatives
- Professional Organizations/Associations
- Business
- United Way
- Parents
- Community Members

Note: If funding allows, states should consider including the computer/database programmer in planning discussions.

3. **Where should the state registry be housed?**

State registry systems are "housed" in a variety of organizations. However, most fall within the following types of organizations: universities, independent 501c3s, state departments, resource and referrals, and private for-profits. Each has pros and cons related to autonomy, infrastructure, access to resources, sustainability, credibility, and visibility. When undertaking this decision, the Alliance recommends that stakeholders draft a list of the pros and cons for each potential "home" and make the decision based on what works in that state.

4. **How do we determine the target population for our registry?**

State registries collect data from a broad spectrum of professionals who work in the early childhood and school-age/after-school professions. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. is in the process of identifying the parameters for its national dataset. To that end, the National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. has decided to organize registry data into the following categories.
- Professionals who work in programs that provide direct care to children
- Professionals who work in programs that do not provide care to children
- Trainers Although the majority of registries collect data on all three, the scope of your data collection efforts will be impacted by whether another initiative in the state is currently collecting data on any of the above-stated groups, the identified goals, and funding.

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5. How do we determine if registry participation should be required or optional?

Ideally, all states would require participation in their state registries. However, few states have a global requirement for professionals who work in programs that care for children or trainers to participate in their state registry. Many states have developed partnerships where professionals must apply to their state registry in order to become eligible for a quality initiative (e.g., compensation program). In addition, many states require that trainers enroll so that the training they offer will count toward professionals' annual training requirement. Both voluntary and required registries have unique challenges related to recruitment and sustainability. Below is a list of items to consider for each option.

- Required Participation- Stakeholders must identify the agency in the state that has the authority to implement the policy. The policy should include language requiring participants to renew or update their information annually. Next, a transition plan should be developed to ensure that the registry has adequate funding and is able to process the volume of applications. Finally, depending on funding status, states might consider charging the applicant a fee for participation.
- Optional Participation- Stakeholders should identify how the registry will encourage professionals to enroll and update their information (e.g., recognition in newsletter, access to scholarship or incentive programs, etc.). Also, partnership agreements requiring registry participation before professionals are able to participate in quality initiatives are essential. Similar to the registries with required participation and depending on funding status, states with optional participation policies might consider charging the applicant a fee for participation.

6. **How do we determine career lattice levels?**

Each state's career lattice is unique and based on a shared philosophy about how to categorize and recognize professional attainment. Some career lattices are based solely on education while others incorporate both education and experience. In addition, some are specific to different roles within the field. Prior to establishing a career lattice, we recommend that you review other states' career lattices. As you plan for your lattice, keep in mind that the registry will be responsible for tracking the data elements proposed on the career lattice. Develop a graphic depiction of your lattice that can be easily understood and serve as a reference in your registry planning and implementation discussions. Remember to keep it simple so that you can market it to the field. Finally, try not to revise it very often as revisions often require significant modifications to the database.

7. How do we start to develop the database system?

The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. recommends that states decide during the planning process whether the vision for the registry includes a web-based component as it will alter how the programmer approaches the database development. One key consideration when

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making these decisions is that up-front database development is more cost-effective than ongoing revisions. Although many states start with a simple database structure and revise the data system as the project grows, the Alliance recommends that states develop database systems that "work" for the registry (e.g., automating functions), thus decreasing the amount of staff time required to complete a task. For example, the database can calculate career lattice levels for a registry. Although staff members from existing registries are a great resource when developing a registry system, states might consider contracting for technical assistance and software development. In fact, many of the existing registry systems utilized a contractor to build their database system. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. is currently developing a list of agencies/organizations that provide technical assistance and software development services. See "Technology" in the Best Practices section of this National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. Resource Guide.

8. How do we determine which data fields to collect?

States should complete an assessment to determine what data elements are being collected about practitioners, trainers, and training in the state to avoid duplication. (Note: If another group is collecting data on any of the three categories, representatives from that group should be included in the planning process. The inclusion of these stakeholders will help ensure that data linkages are possible at a later date.) Next, consider the questions that the registry data need to answer for registry program participation (e.g., data fields for the certificate), potential partnerships with other organizations (e.g., questions for scholarship participation), and public-policy efforts (e.g., the average wage of teachers). A note of caution…think carefully about how you will use the data collected and if the policy question is absolutely essential…. meaning it will translate into policy action as opposed to being an interesting fact. Every data element collected represents a program cost. After the data assessment is complete and the program and policy questions are developed, it is time to define the data elements the state registry will collect. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. has developed a set of resources to support state registries. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. has developed a list of core data elements for practitioner registries and plans to develop core data elements for trainer registries and training tracking systems (i.e., training calendars) within the next year. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. recommends that states review the data elements and determine which data elements are relevant to their program, partnerships, and policy issues. The Alliance strongly recommends that states align their data collection efforts with the Core Data Elements when possible. This will allow the state to participate in the development of the national dataset. (See Section 3 for more information about the core data elements.)

As the state finalizes the data element list, the Alliance recommends that the state documents these decisions by creating a "data element dictionary." A Data Element Dictionary (DED) is a record of all data fields that your registry collects (current and previous). The DED should include the date in which your registry begins/ends data collection for a specific variable, the field name, field type (e.g., text, yes/no, etc.), field description, data table within the database, verification type (self-report, transcript, etc.) and the projects using the data field.

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An example of a Data Element Dictionary (DED):

Began-Ended	Field Name	Verification	Field Type	Description
Jul-17	ID	Assigned	Auto Number	Access choose #-not meaningful
Jul-17	License_Number	Verified if licensed/assigned if unlicensed	Text	Same DVN, may not all have a license number
Jul-17	Program_Name	Verified if licensed/self-report if unlicensed	Text	Entered only if exempt or unlicensed, others in DHSS table

9. How do we develop our enrollment forms/applications?

The enrollment form/application is a tool for the registry to collect the identified data elements. The Alliance recommends that states review enrollment forms/applications from other registries prior to beginning the development process. Questions should be clear and at an appropriate reading level for the target population. The layout of the form is also important so that participants do not inadvertently skip a question. The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. recommends pre-testing a form to see if participants are able to complete it with minimal support.

10. How do we determine registry start-up costs?

In 2005, The National Workforce Registry Alliance, Inc. recommended that states secure at least $150,000 for start-up costs That figure was updated in 2015 with additional details can costs. Contact the Alliance for additional information on costs. Start-up costs include database systems development, staffing costs, materials development, establishing policies and procedures, initial recruitment, and data entry. (Note: Database systems development costs vary greatly depending on the complexity of the database system, whether or not it is web-based, and who develops the system.)

11. What are the potential barriers?

When queried about barriers encountered during the planning and initial implementation process, registry staff reported the following suggestions and comments.
- Confusion About the Role of the Registry
    - o Clarify how your registry fits within the larger vision of your state career development system.
- Data Management System Issues
    - o Define your data management process and policies and procedures.
    - o Expect some setbacks or "glitches" in the data system in the first year.

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- o Recognize that database management is an ongoing process, not a one-time development.
- o Review your process for efficiencies on a regular basis.
- o Document everything!
- Recruitment
    - o Recruiting participants, especially within voluntary systems, can be challenging.
    - o Have the answer to the following question from potential participants: "Why should I join?"
    - o Expect some resistance initially from participants and realize that you will have to earn the trust of your participants and stakeholders through a solid and efficient process.
    - o Be realistic when setting recruitment goals in the first few years.
- Funding
    - o Develop a funding plan that addresses sustainability.
    - o Investigate registry budget categories and how certain functions can inflate/deflate the cost of service.
    - o Strive to make your registry a central component of your state's career development system through data sharing and partnering.
        - ▪ Clarify your position as a data collector with your partners to avoid duplication of services or turf issues.

Use the National Registry Workforce Alliance, Inc. as a resource! Learn from the experiences of other states and avoid some of these challenges.

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