

DECISION

What impact do you want to make with new opportunity policy?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What problem(s) are you trying to solve?

Where are the opportunities to build on new ideas or to improve what exists today?

What does success look like?

What is the vision?

DETAILED QUESTIONS

Where are the biggest gaps between K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce in your state today?

... Where are people falling out of the education-to-workforce pipeline in your state? Why?

What laws shape this work in your state today?

... What definitions or requirements are already written into law that detail what must or can be done?

... Where does the state have flexibility?

What systems and conditions need to be in place?

Which existing efforts could the state build on?

What industries or sectors in your state are keen to create a talent pipeline?

What lessons from other states may inform your plan?

Where does opportunity policy fit with other state priorities?

What does the state hope to learn through this effort?

How will the state measure success?

DECISION

Who are the stakeholders in this work?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Which leaders or agencies have legal authority and must be involved?

Who are the gatekeepers who can facilitate or block progress?

Who are the key stakeholders and how should they be engaged?

DETAILED QUESTIONS

Which stakeholders must be involved under existing state law?

Who else needs to be involved based on the state's political or local context?

Who are the natural champions that can help move this work forward?

Where is resistance likely to emerge?

Do key stakeholders have incentives to support this work? If not, how can they be created and used effectively?

DECISION

How will this work be funded over time?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What existing funding resources already support related work?
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Are there new funding sources available at the federal, state, or philanthropic levels?
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Can existing funding be redirected to support this work?
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DETAILED QUESTIONS

What federal and state funding streams support this work (e.g., Perkins, WIOA, Pell, competitive grants)?
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Is there funding that each participating agency (education, higher education, labor, workforce) can contribute?
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What philanthropic or private-sector funding could support this effort?
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How can the state combine or align these funding sources?
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How can the state create incentives for innovation or participation (e.g., tax credits)?
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DECISION

How will this work be sustained over time?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Does bipartisan support exist now for this work - and/or could it be created – so that the work stays in place through leadership transitions?
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What regulations or legislation exist or can be created to sustain opportunity policy beyond the current administration?
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DETAILED QUESTIONS

Does the state need to pass legislation or establish regulations?
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Can an executive order support this work?
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Is there a plan for leadership succession?
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Has the state identified agency or program leaders to support this work through leadership transitions?
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Has the state gathered data, evaluated impact to demonstrate efficacy, and publicized this information?
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Are there local success stories the state can highlight to strengthen public support?
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Are there additional opportunities to institutionalize new practices into regular, ongoing work?
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Are there opportunities to embed this work in the state's core infrastructure (e.g. accountability systems, funding formulas, etc.)?
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Does the state have a long-term funding strategy that can grow with and sustain this work over time?
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Has the state adequately invested in capacity to ensure this work has ongoing operational support?
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DECISION

How will the state support and monitor implementation and impact?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What governance structure will drive this work? Who will be accountable for results?
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How will state leadership track and communicate progress against goals?
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Who is responsible for managing continuous improvement to make adjustments over time?
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DETAILED QUESTIONS

Are decision-makers clearly identified? Are reporting structures clear?
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Who should lead and coordinate this work across agencies and partners to ensure sustained commitment and focus?
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What tools will the state use to measure program quality?
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Who is responsible for tracking implementation and making improvements?
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Who is responsible for communicating – both externally and internally – what the work is, why it matters, and how it will happen?
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Has the state set clear benchmarks and timelines for progress (1-year, 3-year, 5-year)?
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What guardrails will protect the state’s vision as the work expands?
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Are mechanisms in place for course correction?
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DECISION

What is the state’s readiness to move from aspiration to execution?

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Are key state systems ready to support this work?
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What capacity (people, expertise, and time) is available to fuel this work?
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DETAILED QUESTIONS

Does the state have the resources to collect, track, and analyze results?
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... Can the state data systems be used to track outcomes over time?
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... Can agencies share data? If not, what agreements are needed?
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... What does the state hope to learn through this effort?
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Do state agencies and local partners have the capacity to implement this work?
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... If not, how can that capacity be bolstered?
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Where are there weak spots?
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What tradeoffs may need to be made?
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... Is there capacity for another new initiative?
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... Are there existing state initiatives that may compete for time, money, and attention?
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