PROJECT SIGNAL

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2021 UPDATE

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PROJECT SIGNAL

Access to the right information at the right time is key to increasing economic opportunity. Project Signal will unlock existing data to enable low-income Bay Area residents to access personalized education and employment pathways to family-sustaining jobs.

Project Signal envisions a future where talent market signals are clear and accessible to all. Where workers can easily answer critical questions such as: What jobs are available in my region? What skills and credentials do I need in order to get those jobs? Where can I go to get those skills and credentials? What can I expect to earn? A future where comparing training providers is as easy as comparing restaurants on Yelp. There is an immediate need for solutions that better connect individuals to education, training, and employment, but the need is particularly acute in California. The San Francisco and Los Angeles metro areas, for example, have among the largest income disparities,[1] highest costs of living, and widest "skills gaps"[2] in the country.[3]

Project Signal intends to address this longstanding challenge through a statewide effort to build a public data collaborative that powers personalized, secure, and seamless access to education and career information. A data trust is a legal, technical, and governance framework that brings together organizations to securely connect their respective data in ways that create new value for their organizations and the public good. These connected data resources allow individuals and organizations to obtain the dynamic, real-time information they need on education and training opportunities to achieve their individual and collective goals. They lay the groundwork for a host of user-centered tools—from personalized guides that individuals can use to navigate from unemployment to a good job, to apps that function like a Facebook home page for local careers, generating customized lists of jobs based on a worker's educational attainment, employment history and income goals.

In short, a data trust—and the tools it enables—will be the foundation of the new set of tools that provide job seekers and students with the information they need to make informed decisions.

With generous support from ReWork the Bay, Genentech, and the Irvine Foundation, the Project Signal Workforce Data Trust is bringing together a broad range of Bay Area stakeholders, to lay the groundwork for these solutions. Project Signal started in the Bay Area as a pilot in early 2019, but quickly gained the attention of stakeholders across the state and conversations have begun to expand out to new regions in 2021. This work could revolutionize how Californians navigate education and work—and if successful, serve as a model for the rest of the country.

[1] https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/California
[2] https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/blog/linkedin-workforce-report-december- 2018-san-francisco-ca?src=li-other&veh=www.linkedin.com
[3] https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/economy/2018/09/12/cost-live- america-most-expensive-cities/37748097/

WORKFORCE DATA TRUST UPDATE

In the summer of 2019, the Project Signal team formed and began laying the foundation for the Bay Area data trust. Following initial engagement with key Bay Area education and workforce stakeholders to identify the challenges that low-income Bay Area residents face in navigating education and employment pathways, the Project Signal team identified a set of critical data collaboration challenges, or use cases. These included:

- The inability of individuals to find, differentiate, and compare credential and training opportunities in their communities.
- The inability of worker support advocates and organizations to find (additional) comprehensive credential and training program opportunities for individuals.
- The inability of credential and training program providers to assess the effectiveness of their programs on graduates, the institution itself, and the broader community.
- The difficulty for credential and training program providers to manage all analytic and reporting requirements to multiple partners, funders, and the government.

Based on these initial challenges the Project Signal team developed a set of initial use cases that a data trust could help address:

- **Increasing discoverability of credential and training programs** — Using data from program providers in the Bay Area, the Bay Area Pilot will "map" existing opportunities and allow job seekers to "discover" them using easily accessible tools, and will also allow program providers to better understand where gaps or opportunities for expansion exist.
- **Calculating the employment and education outcomes of credential and training programs** — Linking participant-level data of program graduates with employment data from the U.S. Census Bureau and education data from the National Student Clearinghouse, the pilot will allow Bay Area residents to access information about program effectiveness and success, helping them make more informed career decisions.
- **Evaluating and designing credential and training programs** — Providing up-to-date and actionable data to education and training programs in the Bay Area, the pilot will allow providers to more clearly assess whether their current programs and credentials are in sync with local labor market demand.

The Project Signal team next determined the outcomes and data needed for each use case, as well as the relevant organizations who either own or control the data key to addressing them. The Project Signal team then obtained commitments from a group of organizations who would participate in the pilot, forming a Minimum Viable Coalition (MVC)—the initial set of data providing organizations which are essential to addressing the initial use case.

The initial focus on a single use case, and an MVC essential to addressing it, ensures the development process is manageable and targeted. Project Signal's "land and expand" approach, however, also allows for the data trust members to use the existing data trust foundation to evolve with the needs of the members and the broader community by expanding to include new use cases, data providing organizations, and users.

Training Data Providers
JobTrain, Jewish Vocational Services, Opportunity Junction

Credential and Training Program Advisors
Goodwill of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin, San Mateo County Community College, Goodwill of Silicon Valley, Bay Area Community College Consortium

WORK COMPLETED & NEXT STEPS

2019

Phase I - Data Trust Formation (Completed July - October 2019)
Data Trust Formation is focused on identifying data trust goals, corresponding data collaboration challenges, or use cases, and the Minimum Viable Coalition: the initial set of organizations that are key to providing the data or have the experience needed to successfully and appropriately address the initial use cases.

2020

Phase II - Data Trust Discovery (Completed November 2019 - October 2020)
With an initial use case and MVC selected, Project Signal transitioned to engaging in discovery related to MVC participating organizations' data and technical maturity to participate in the data trust and address the initial use case. The Discovery phase also focused on developing and executing a data trust agreement (DTA) specifying the responsibilities, procedures and technical specifications of the data trust. The MVC also convened its first data trust governance board meeting.

Q1 2021

Phase III - Data Trust Configuration (November 2020 - March 2021)
Informed by the Discovery phase, Brighthive will develop and test the software that enables data collection, integration, and sharing of data to create the initial use case outcomes. To inform the type of data that are important to workers and job seekers, the Data Trust formed a Worker Voice committee of former job training program participants. The Data Trust Governance Board continues to provide feedback and will also identify and approve the appropriate third-party applications to make this information available to workers and learners.

Q2 2021

Phase IV - Data Trust Deployment (April - June 2021)
Once configured, the Project Signal team will deploy the data trust, allowing MVC organizations and approved users to access new, combined data resources about the programmatic details of training programs and providers in the Bay Area. The data trust governance board will continue to manage and monitor the deployment, while beginning to collaborate on potential expansions, including new use cases, new data providing organizations, and new users.

Q3 2021

Phase V - Data Trust Sustainability & Expansion (ongoing)
With a data trust that is functioning as intended, the Data Trust Governance Board will meet regularly to continue management and monitoring, and identify and approve expansions that address the evolving data and collaboration needs of its members and the broader community. Data trust expansion generally falls into three categories: 1) increasing the coverage of the data trust—inviting new members to contribute rows of data to the trust and providing users with information about more training programs, 2) providing more details about programs included in the trust—developing additional metrics and measures of quality that learners will utilize to compare training programs and providers, and 3) increasing the quality of existing metrics—identifying and approving additional sources of information that will ensure current metrics accurately and equitably measure the quality of training programs.

If you are interested in learning more about
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