Data Analytics: Now What

What was the Objective?

WIOA mandates data driven decision making and agencies within the system are finding ways to gather valuable data, yet there are some challenges on how to utilize this data and drive continuous improvement based on information. The capstone project is two-fold research project. It addresses challenges on gathering and effectively using data within the workforce system and it also identifies specific data-driven continuous improvement practices of some Workforce Development Agencies.

Approach

Researched general data analytics and continuous improvement principles, researched WIBs websites, and reviewed WIB agenda meeting notes to analyze information.

Lessons Learned

I. **Four Common Challenges of Data Usage in the Workforce Development System**

   A) <u>Lack of Data Visibility or Limited Access to Data</u> – Most Workforce Development agencies have data collection systems in place, but sometimes data is not available to appropriate audiences, nor is it presented in an understandable way.

   B) <u>Data Quality and Consistency Are Lacking</u>-This must be an ongoing process to data analysis, yet not all workforce development agencies have systems in place to focus on data integrity.

   C) <u>Shared Language is Lacking</u>- Different providers may have different definitions of performance, creating data gathering and reporting difficulties. (i.e. CalJobs) Shared language and definitions are the starting point of effective measurement and continuous improvement action

   D) <u>Data Isn't Used to Drive Real-Time Decision Making-</u> The current workforce development design does not always encourage the proactive use of data in everyday workforce investment decision making. Currently, the system and data collection efforts are largely designed to meet just the goals of individual program and federal government accountability.

II. **Examples of Data-Driven Continuous Improvement**

   A) Workforce Development San Bernardino County used data to redesign their youth program. They studied all current data elements collected, created reports and compared them to WIOA performance/outcomes and identified performance gaps in their continuity of services. This resulted in changing their procurement procedure, which included their RFP process, proposal scoring matrix and contact award recommendations.

   B) Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board, used data to create a model that was developed and is being used to supplement industry analysis with a more occupation-based look at career pathways. The change has led to a top 100 occupations document, profiles of pathways for the local area, and ultimately a Skills Acquisition Chart that forms the basis of service delivery planning.

   C) Ohio Workforce Development used employer data to identity their most urgent workforce needs and then incorporated the information into a searchable online database.

Conclusion and Next Steps

WIOA demands data-driven results and continuous improvement, yet this is a challenging element of the legislation. Some Workforce Development Agencies have overcome data obstacles and made successful changes, but others have not been so successful. The next steps would be to use this information to determine my organization's role in working with the local Workforce Development Agencies in helping them overcome challenges and aid them in using data to drive continuous improvement. Furthermore, information learned from this project can be used to focus on my own organization's data challenges and apply modeled best practices to create continuous improvement opportunities within my own CBO.