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# STRATEGIC APPROACH

2021-2023

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Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System

*Adopted by the NSWERS Executive Council on December 21, 2020 and April 26, 2021.*

*Strategic Plan Effective July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023.*



# foreword

Nearly a century ago, Senator George W. Norris led Nebraska on a campaign to improve state government. Intent on addressing an outdated, costly, and ineffective system of governance, his efforts produced a solution uniquely Nebraskan – the single-house, nonpartisan legislature.

Today, Nebraska faces new questions of efficacy. Two decades into the 21st Century, and well into the Digital Age, our work – and *how* we work – have changed. The private sector has been remade through the availability and use of digital information. Yet, our systems of education and governance lag behind in this regard.

Thanks to the pioneering work of Nebraska leaders, and through generous financial support from leading philanthropies, the Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) has arrived. A one-of-a-kind partnership between Nebraska's education and workforce systems, NSWERS stands poised to leverage digital information as a strategic asset for the competitive advantage of Nebraska.

To this end, I am pleased to present herein the inaugural Strategic Approach for NSWERS. With its release, we signal a close to the era of analog decision-making. Together, we will work to create *a data-informed decision culture that supports pathways of learning and earning for the people of Nebraska.*

Like great Nebraskans before us, we are still called to solve problems. It is my hope that future generations will see NSWERS and our efforts to embrace the Digital Age for economic and societal prosperity as, again, a solution uniquely Nebraskan, and commensurate to the challenges of our day.

Matthew J. Hastings, Ph.D.  
Founding Executive Director, NSWERS



# intro & history

The Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) has its roots in Legislative Bill 1071 enacted by the One Hundred First Legislature, Second Session, signed into law by Governor Heineman on April 14, 2010. This bill directed the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State Board of Education, the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges, and the Board of Governors for each community college area to adopt a policy to share student data. The resulting Memorandum of Understanding established an agreement “to share student data for the purposes of evaluation of and research related to public prekindergarten, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education to improve education in Nebraska.” In the fall of 2019, these partners advanced this cooperation and completed the legal formation of the NSWERS as a joint public entity under the Nebraska Interlocal Cooperation Act for mutual advantage regarding data initiatives.

Additionally, the Nebraska Unicameral recently passed Legislative Bill 1160. Signed into law by Governor Ricketts on August 10, 2020, this bill – known as the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Education Reporting System Act (2020) – supports the continued planning and development of NSWERS, envisioned as a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system serving the needs of the people of Nebraska. Further, the bill directs the Nebraska Department of Labor to execute a memorandum of understanding with NSWERS to ensure the exchange of available data from the Nebraska Department of Labor.

The NSWERS Executive Council is led by the Council President, Ted Carter, President of the University of Nebraska. Additional members of the founding Executive Council for NSWERS include: Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education, Dr. Paul Turman, Chancellor of the Nebraska State Colleges System, and Dr. Paul Illich, President of Southeast Community College, representing all six Nebraska community college areas. While NSWERS has been in development for some time, the NSWERS Executive Council met regularly throughout 2020 to formally operationalize NSWERS as an administrative entity.

On September 1, 2020, Dr. Matt Hastings was hired as founding Executive Director for NSWERS. He has begun efforts to establish core operational capacities, build a team of dedicated NSWERS staff, and create the procedural and technical structures necessary for the creation and maintenance of an NSWERS data system. Dr. Hastings works closely with the NSWERS Management Council – the operational board of NSWERS – which includes representatives from the NSWERS partner entities, including Dr. Kristin Yates of the University of Nebraska, Brian Halstead of the Nebraska Department of Education, Dr. Jodi Kupper of the Nebraska State College System, and Dr. Leah Barrett of Northeast Community College, representing all six Nebraska community colleges.

# legislative



# direction

The Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Education[al] Reporting System is envisioned as a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system to allow for the targeting of resources, and focus data analysis on assessing workforce development and employment success in order to enable the training of tomorrow's workforce.

Legislative Bill 1160  
(section 2, subsection 3)

# vision

we aspire to...



**Create a data-informed decision culture that supports successful pathways of learning and earning for the people of Nebraska.**

# mission

we exist to...

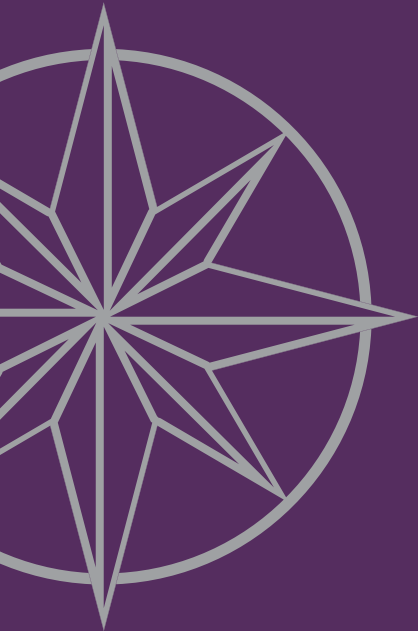
**Integrate and organize  
Nebraska's education  
and workforce data to  
inform decision making.**



# 5

# guiding principles

we value...



**Quality**

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1

**Excellence**

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2

**Collaboration**

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3

**Continuous Improvement**

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4

**Integrity**

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5



# organizational scope



## **AS A DATA SYSTEM:**

organize all elements and functions necessary for a comprehensive, sustainable, and robust lifelong learning and workforce longitudinal data system.



## **AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY:**

manage all matters related to the creation, communication, operation, security, maintenance, expansion, and use of the NSWERS data system.

# 2 goals

we are successful if we...

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**Establish the  
NSWERS  
data system  
for sustainable  
insights.**

02

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**Evaluate the  
efficacy of  
Nebraska's  
education and  
workforce  
training  
systems.**

# strategic plan



Goal	1	Establish Data System	Establish NSWERS data system for sustainable insights.
Objective	1.1	Develop & Implement Foundational Elements	Develop the human capacity, technical infrastructures, policies and procedures necessary for operational success
Strategy	1.1.1	Define Organizational Strategies	Define core approach to accomplishing organizational goals via codified strategies and plans
Strategy	1.1.2	Establish Organizational Structures	Establish structures to situate and coordinate work for efficient and effective operations
Strategy	1.1.3	Create and Implement Organizational System	Create and implement systems and processes that add value to the organization
Strategy	1.1.4	Acquire & Maintain Organizational Skills	Acquire the capabilities and skills required for organizational success
Objective	1.2	Define NSWERS Data Collection	Define NSWERS data collection to support research objectives and organizational goals
Strategy	1.2.1	Ensure the Interoperability of NSWERS Data	Ensure NSWERS systems and services to create, exchange and consume data via a common set of exchange formats
Strategy	1.2.2	Leverage Nebraska Person ID System	Leverage the Nebraska Person ID System for Cross-Partner matching efforts.
Strategy	1.2.3	Pursue Value-Add Partner Support Activities	Pursue value-add data collection opportunities for partner support.
Strategy	1.2.4	Leverage Public Domain Data Repositories	Leverage data from the public domain to supplement NSWERS Administrative Data
Strategy	1.2.5	Explore Methodologies for Auxiliary Data Collection	Explore methodologies to supplement NSWERS administrative data with auxiliary data necessary to execute on information agenda

Objective	1.3	Design and Execute Data Acquisition	Create the technical and procedural processes necessary for acquiring quality data from NSWERS Partners and Affiliates
Strategy	1.3.1	Develop and Implement a Secure, Web-Based Portal	Develop a one-stop, web-based portal for NSWERS Partners, Affiliates and authorized users to communicate key tasks and needs.
Strategy	1.3.2	Leverage Industry-Standard Data Exchange Technologies	Leverage industry-standard data exchanged technologies to facilitate secure data transfer to and from NSWERS
Strategy	1.3.3	Develop and Implement Quality Control Processes	Develop and implement quality control processes to ensure NSWERS data fitness of use
Strategy	1.3.4	Establish Annual Calendar	Establish dates and timelines necessary for the submission of data to NSWERS
Objective	1.4	Optimize Data Processing and Protect Digital Assets	Ensure informational protection, privacy safeguards and cybersecurity
Strategy	1.4.1	Establish and Maintain a Robust Data Security Program	Protect the technical aspects of how NSWERS data are collected, stored, and transferred through the information technology infrastructure
Strategy	1.4.2	Implement a Comprehensive Program of Data Governance	Implement comprehensive program of data governance to ensure the overall availability, usability, integrity, quality, privacy and security of NSWERS data
<b>Goal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Evaluate Efficacy</b>	<b>Evaluate the efficacy of Nebraska's education and workforce training systems</b>
Objective	2.1	Create NSWERS Information Agenda	Create and publish an information agenda to prioritize and codify high-value research/decision topics and questions of interest
Strategy	2.1.1	Adopt Solutions for Timeliness, Relevance and Accuracy	Adopt solutions that anticipate questions for a timely response, support decision making with decision-relevant information, and motivates accuracy
Objective	2.2	Establish Data Analysis and Prediction Operations	Establish NSWERS data analysis and prediction operations for the study of Nebraska's education and workforce training systems
Strategy	2.2.1	Implement a Modern, Flexible and Scalable Analytics Unit	Implement a modern, flexible, and scalable analytics environment designed to leverage the latest analytic tools and research methodologies for rapid-response and in-depth services
Strategy	2.2.2	Establish Collaboration Opportunities and Cultivate Funding	Establish collaboration opportunities and cultivate funding streams that enable education-workforce program evaluation and project scale-up review

Strategy	2.2.3	Leverage the Capacity of NSWERS Partners and Affiliates	Leverage the capacity of NSWERS partners and affiliates to engage faculty and staff, students and parents, communities and regions across Nebraska
Objective	2.3	Report on Longitudinal Outcomes	Assess Nebraska’s education and workforce training systems against an outcome framework informed by nationwide standards
Strategy	2.3.1	Operationalize and Measure Education Outcomes	Track education outcomes by school and institution based on job placement - location (in-state/out-of-state), region (rural/urban), field of study/field of position, skills required, etc.
Strategy	2.3.2	Operationalize and Measure Workforce Outcomes	Track workforce outcomes by school and institution based on job placement - location (in-state/out-of-state), region (rural/urban), field of study/field of position, skills required, etc.
Objective	2.4	Release Data and Disseminate Research & Evaluation Findings	Provide machine-readable data and disseminate research and evaluation findings to inform decision making
Strategy	2.4.1	Establish and Maintain a data Clearinghouse to facilitate Data as a Product (DaaP) Enterprise	Establish and maintain an education-workforce information repository to disseminate NSWERS information, data, and metadata to partners, affiliates, and beyond
Strategy	2.4.2	Establish and Maintain Data as a Service (DaaS) Enterprise	Establish and maintain education-workforce information services to enhance data value with NSWERS partners, affiliates, and beyond.
Strategy	2.4.3	Create or Acquire Communications Methods and Platforms	Create or acquire methods and platforms to communicate and deliver data through both public and secure channels
Strategy	2.4.4	Strengthen Awareness, Facilitate Collaborations and Drive System Improvements	Utilize NSWERS data and information to highlight and motivate decisions to spur education and workforce system improvements

# team

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## LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

**Matt Hastings**  
Executive Director  
NSWERS

**Katie Bieber**  
Communications Manager  
NSWERS

**Alex Brodersen**  
Assistant Director, Research & Evaluation  
NSWERS

**Sam Kapoor**  
Assistant Director, Database/ETL Development  
NSWERS

**Vanessa Zimmer**  
Office Associate  
NSWERS

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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**President**  
Ted Carter  
President  
University of Nebraska

**Vice President**  
Paul Turman  
Chancellor  
Nebraska State Colleges System

**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Matthew Blomstedt  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska Department of Education

**Member**  
Paul Illich  
President  
Southeast Community College  
Representing Nebraska's Community Colleges

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**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Leah Barrett**  
President  
Northeast Community College  
Representing Nebraska's Community Colleges

**Brian Halstead**  
Deputy Commissioner  
Nebraska Department of Education

**Jodi Kupper**  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Partnerships  
Nebraska State College System

**Kristin Yates**  
Associate Vice President for Enterprise Data Solutions  
and Chief Data Officer  
University of Nebraska

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**PARTNERS****Nebraska Community Colleges**

Central Community College

Metropolitan Community College

Mid Plains Community College

Northeast Community College

Southeast Community College

Western Nebraska Community College

**Nebraska Department of Education****Nebraska State Colleges**

Chadron State College

Peru State College

Wayne State College

**University of Nebraska**

University of Nebraska at Kearney

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

University of Nebraska Medical Center

University of Nebraska Omaha

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**AFFILIATE**

Nebraska Department of Labor





Nebraska Statewide Workforce  
& Educational Reporting System  
(NSWERS)



## address

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901 N 17th  
NH W 208  
Lincoln NE, 68588-0524



## phone

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402.472.5238



## email

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[info@nswers.org](mailto:info@nswers.org)

[nswers.org](http://nswers.org)