Roadmap to Reskilling:
A GO Virginia Region 7 Project

Preliminary Findings & Observations

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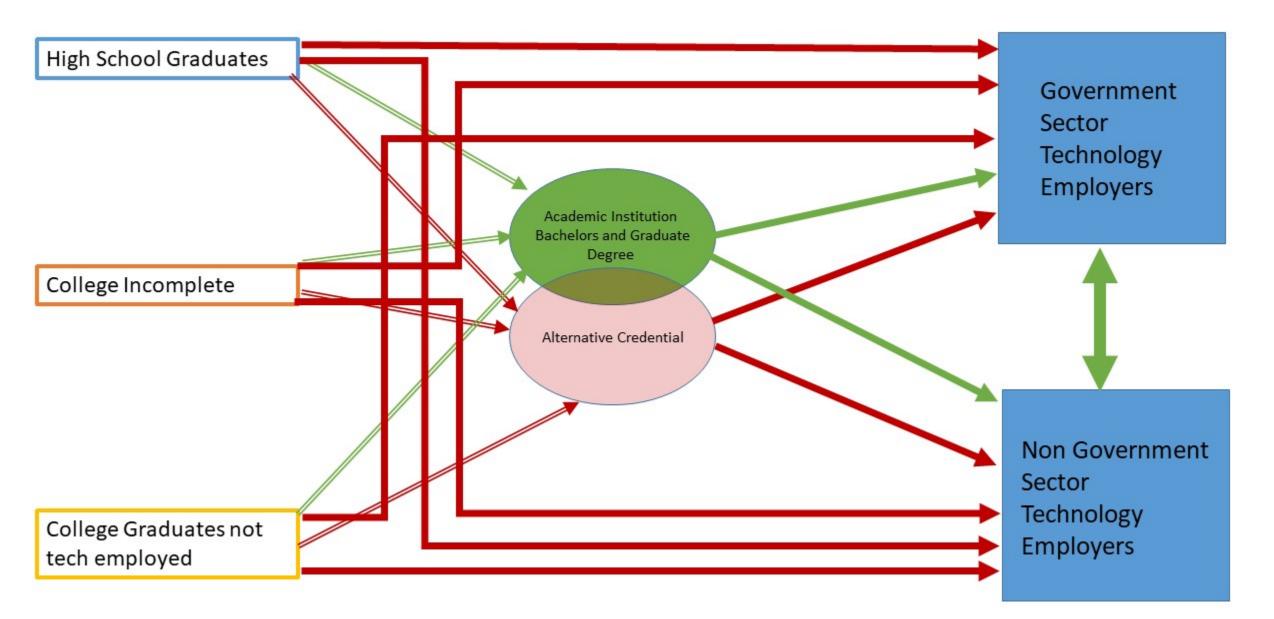Marymount University

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Reskilling Leisure, Hospitality and Retail Workers for Technology Employment

- Could a large scale effort led by GoVirginia Region 7 get these displaced workers into technology jobs in the Region 7 technology industry?

- Would people who were part of L,H and R be attractive candidates due to their "customer skills?"

- Could a particular training program make them suitable for technology employment?

- By focusing on these types of workers, we were also able to gain insights in how tech companies approach nontraditional candidates generally, which has relevance of questions of equality of access and demographic diversity in hiring.

Two Distinct Roadmaps

Traditional candidates sourced from degree based credentialization – where students complete an educational process at an accredited institution and obtain a recognized degree.

Nontraditional candidates sourced from alternative credentialization – bootcamps, training programs, competency certificates – where students complete a specific skills-based training.

Employment Roadmap: Traditional & Nontraditional Candidates

High School Graduates

College Incomplete

College Graduates not tech employed

Academic Institution Bachelors and Graduate Degree

Alternative Credential

Government Sector Technology Employers

Non Government Sector Technology Employers

Key Findings

- We do not have one technology industry in this region – we actually have two: government technology and private commercial technology. Both of these industries have services, solution and technology product offerings – although government technology is MUCH more focused on services and solutions and the private sector is more focused on product.

- We have THREE distinct groups of technology employers: government technology, private commercial technology and companies that USE technology as part of their business.

- Each of these employers has distinctly different requirements in what they need in an entry level or experienced technology hire.
    - For example, for government – a degree, US citizenship and a clearable background are almost essential.
    - That is less important for private sector employers.

- The government technology market for technology talent is particularly stressed by market demand, and competition with private sector. "We are rearranging the deckchairs" was how one interviewee put it.

Observations

- Very few company programs or intake processes focused on nontraditional candidates generally.
- Surplus of training programs, but a shortage of candidates with a demonstrable commitment to technology employment.
- Commercial companies are more open to hiring nontraditional candidates
- Making Non-Traditional Candidates more attractive
  - "Speak with the language" of the employer.
  - Completing a coherent program of multiple training programs that demonstrate competence and commitment.
  - Work readiness skills – LinkedIn, Sales force, Slack.
- Making Tech employment more attractive to non-traditional candidates
  - Training to map their achievements to requirements of posted opportunities.
  - Interview preparation.
  - Story telling to understand their career options.
  - Knowledge of which degrees or alternative credentials led to jobs, and which kind.

Preliminary Conclusions

- Our region doesn't need more training programs per se, it needs greater visibility for candidates on which ones are respected.

- Nontraditional candidates don't know what they are able to do with their expertise in a technology employment context.

- The pathway to get both traditional and nontraditional candidates into government technology employment is SUBSTANTIALLY different.

- There may be a different pathway and roadmap for disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

- The region would benefit from an independent and objective information source on pathways and outcomes.

- Nontraditional candidates would benefit from their own "career services" office, and traditional candidates would benefit from greater resources and coordination of career support programs.