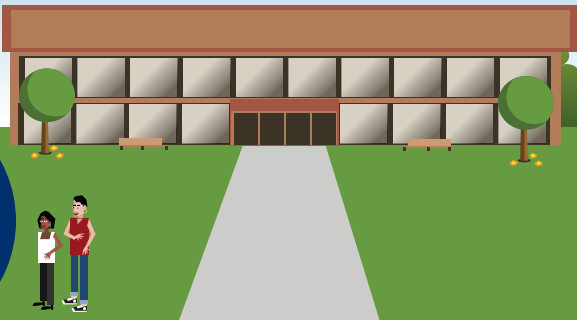# Understanding Employment & Earnings Data

Colleges are increasingly being asked to review employment and earnings data on their former students to understand the impact of their programs, and with the development of statewide tools like the Salary Surfer and the LaunchBoard, more practitioners now have access to this information.

HOWEVER There is no definitive source of employment information that can answer the full range of questions that educators and policymakers have.

Where Can I View Employment Information On My Students?

There are four tools that support access to employment and earnings information on California community college students.

4 TOOLS

1 LAUNCHBOARD
- Publicly available
- Employment, employment in field of study, pre/post earnings, living wages
- Includes exiting, completing, skills-builder students
- Shows results for regions and colleges
- Provides annual data
- Opportunity to download summary information

2 CTE OUTCOMES SURVEY
- Colleges receive unitary information
- Publicly available
- Employment, employment in field of study, pre/post earnings
- Includes completing, transfer, skills-builder students
- Shows results for the whole state and for colleges
- Provides annual data

3 SALARY SURFER
- Publicly available
- Pre/post earnings
- Only includes students who earned a certificate or degree
- Shows results for the whole state
- Includes 5 years of combined data
- Opportunity to download summary information

4 COLLEGE WAGE TRACKER
- Publicly available
- Post college earnings
- Only includes students who earned a certificate or degree
- Shows results for colleges
- Includes 8 years of combined data
- Opportunity to download summary information

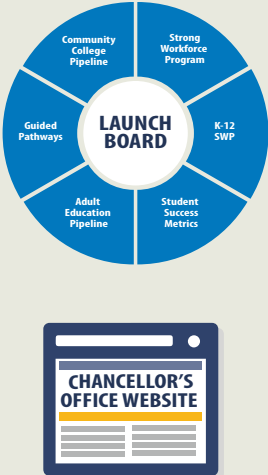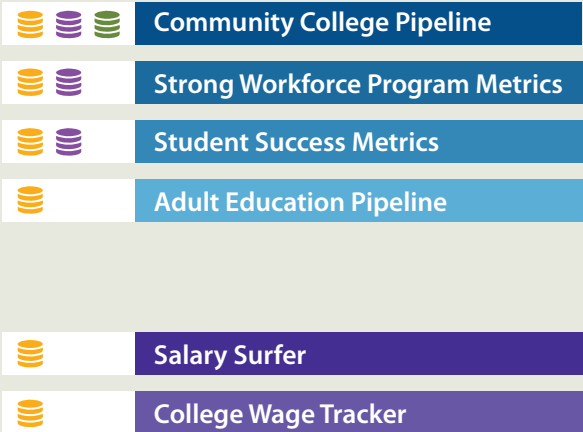## Employment & Earnings Data Come From Three Sources

KEY
- California's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage File
- CTE Outcomes Survey
- Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

- Community College Pipeline
- Strong Workforce Program Metrics
- Student Success Metrics
- Adult Education Pipeline

→ LAUNCHBOARD
(Community College Pipeline, Strong Workforce Program, K-12 SWP, Student Success Metrics, Adult Education Pipeline, Guided Pathways)

- Salary Surfer
- College Wage Tracker

→ CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE WEBSITE

How Comprehensive Are Employment Data Sources?

California's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage File

70-80%
of community college students can be matched to the employment and earnings data in the state wage file

BUT
- Does not include people who work for the federal government, the military, move to other states, are paid in cash, or are self-employed
- Requires valid social security number
- Data tools will always lag by at least two years

CTE Outcome Survey

33%
of the roughly 151,500 students surveyed in 2019 responded (this is a high response rate)

BUT
- Not sent to all former students
- Surveys can only be sent to students for whom colleges have current contact information
- Lowest earners are less likely to respond
- Data tools will always lag by at least two years

What Should I Consider When Reviewing Employment And Earnings Data?

Dollar Amounts Are Not the Only Measure of Value
- Pay rates vary by occupation
- More selective programs often pay more
- Geographic location is a factor

Central Valley / Sillicon Valley

👁 Look at earnings gains, rather than absolute dollar values, and compare earnings to regional living wages.

Each Data Source Provides Only Part of the Answer
- California's Unemployment Insurance Wage File can provide baseline information on employment and earnings
- The CTE Outcomes Survey can help fill in the gaps about students' employment status

👁 Discuss figures with students, faculty, and employers to get a deeper understanding on the context for student outcomes.

Transfer Students Are Generally Excluded
Salary Surfer, Wage Tracker, Student Success Metrics, and the LaunchBoard Strong Workforce Program tab exclude transfer students from employment and earnings calculations.

👁 Use the CTE Outcomes Survey or the LaunchBoard Community College Pipeline to examine transfer student results.