

October 27, 2023

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Leader Jeffries, and Leader McConnell:

As you consider annual funding legislation, the nearly 250 undersigned organizations representing workers, workforce development boards, state and local governments, career and technical education (CTE) leaders and practitioners, community and technical colleges, adult educators, labor and labor management partnerships, community based-organizations, non-profit organizations, and businesses call on you to support robust investments in workforce and education to meet the needs of employers and workers alike.

With historically low unemployment levels, employers are already struggling to find enough skilled workers to fill existing job openings. [Recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that there are nearly two job openings for every unemployed worker.](#) As federal investments in infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing continue to roll out, demand for workers is expected to increase. [Indeed, combined investments in BIL, IRA, and CHIPS are projected to support nearly 3 million jobs per year. Over the lifetime of these investments, total job creation is estimated at nearly 19 million job years.](#)

At the same time that the economy is showing high demand for workers, nearly 15 million people are looking for jobs or better employment right now. People of color, women, and individuals without a high school diploma are overrepresented in this figure in part due to structural barriers to family-sustaining jobs. The skills that unemployed and underemployed individuals have been able to access aren't necessarily the skills that are needed for existing job opportunities. As technology advances and the economy changes, workers will require access to training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities throughout their careers.

In order to address the skills mismatch, create a more equitable economy, meet employer needs, and support workers throughout their careers, Congress must invest sufficiently in workforce programs.

Unfortunately for nearly twenty years, Congress has steadily cut investments in critical workforce programs which has contributed to a workforce ecosystem that is unable to meet demand from employers and workers today. Instead of continuing the trend of funding reductions, Congress should provide adequate investment in workers and the programs that support them as part of the federal fiscal year 2024 appropriations process.

Specifically, we call on Congress to:

- Pass legislation that funds workforce programs for the 2024 fiscal year at levels no less than those proposed in the Senate appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies.
- Provide dedicated resources to industry sector partnerships. Partnerships are a proven strategy to help employers within a region or industry identify workforce needs, provide training and supportive services that connects workers with in-demand jobs, and can help to address barriers that cause inequities in the workplace.
- Include language that expands Pell grants to individuals entering short-term skills training and education programs. Pell grants are an important tool to make education more affordable and accessible for those with the greatest need. Expanding Pell grants to shorter programs will support workers' ability to increase their skills and access good jobs quickly.
- Support grant programs that invest in building workers' digital skills. [There is overwhelming demand for digital skills in the labor market as 92% of jobs require digital skills yet only two-thirds of workers have the foundational digital skills necessary to enter and succeed in today's jobs.](#) Workers of color are disproportionately likely to face digital skills gaps due to longstanding inequities. Investments in programs that build digital skills will help prepare workers for existing and future jobs.
- Provide funding that allows institutions of higher education to support career pathways, skills training and education, and supportive services to help meet workers where they are and support them as they move up or change industries throughout their careers.

In order to meet the needs of workers and employers alike and support federal investments in infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing, we urge Congress to prioritize investments in workforce and education. We thank you for your leadership and stand ready to work with you as you come to agreement on funding for the 2024 fiscal year.

Sincerely,

1903 Public Relations
AccuRounds
Action Collaboration
Adams County Board of County Commissioners
Adams County Workforce Development Board
Advance CTE
Advantage Plus Home Care
Alameda County Workforce Development Board
Allegany County
America Achieves
Anaheim Workforce Development Board
Andromeda Community Initiative
Arapahoe/Douglas Works!
Arizona Center for Youth Resources
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
Association for Career and Technical Education

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Authors and Editors 2learn-English
Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition
Big Thought
Brooklyn Workforce Innovations
Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships
Bunker Hill Community College
Business and Workforce Center, serving Jefferson, Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties
California Workforce Association
California Workforce Development Board
Canandaigua Driving School
CanCode Communities
Capital Area Michigan Works!
Capital District Educational Opportunity Center
Career Systems Dev/Chautauqua Works
Carroll County Adult Education
Catherine McAuley Center
Cattaraugus-Allegany Workforce Development Board
Cayuga Cortland Workforce Development Board
Center for Employment Opportunities
Center for Employment Training
Center for Neurobehavioral Services, Inc.
Center for New York City Affairs at The New School
Center of Workforce Innovations
Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
Chautauqua Workforce Development Board
Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce New York
Chenango County Office of Employment and Training
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.
City of Oakland Workforce Development Board
City of Richmond Employment and Training Department
CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office
Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
Colorado Urban Workforce Alliance
Columbia-Greene Community College
Commercial Vehicle Training Association
Community Architects
Consortium for Worker Education
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW)
Custom Collaborative
Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation
Diversity Inc
Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County
Dowsefactor
Dutchess County WO
EASTCONN

Eckerd Connects
Elan Centre
EmployIndy
Erase The Divide LLC
Exeter Adult Ed
FCI Constructors Inc.
FIRE a Partner of Capital Region Workforce Development/Arc of Rensselaer County
First Institute Training and Management, Inc,
Forbes Field Associates, LLC
GeekPack, Inc.
Genesee-Livingston-Orleans-Wyoming Workforce Development Board
Genesis Center
Georgia Budget & Policy Institute
Golden Sierra Job Training Agency
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Grand Junction Economic Partnership
Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works!
Greater Raritan One Stop Career Training Center
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
GreenForce Training Inc
GST Michigan Works!
Hispanic Federation
Hi-Tech Electric Company
Hope Whispers Community Organization Inc
IEC Pennsylvania
Imperial County Workforce & Economic Development
Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute
IPBooks
Island Harvest Food Bank
Jane Addams Resource Corporation
Jefferson-Lewis WDB
Jewish Family and Career Services of Louisville
JFF
Juma Ventures
JVS
JVS SoCal
Kalamazoo RESA
KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative)
Keene Community Education
Kinexus Group
Labor Institute for Training
Laystrom Manufacturing Co.
Le Moyne College
Literacy Pittsburgh
Literacy Source
Literacy Volunteers of Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties
Longview TX Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
Lummi Indian Business Council

Luzerne County Community College
M Joanne Kantner and Associates
Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works!
Manchester Adult High School
Marshall Excelsior Company
Maryland Workforce Association
Massachusetts Workforce Association
Mesa County
Metro Center NYU
Michigan Works! Association
Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium
Michigan Works! West Central
Michigan Works! Southwest
Midwest Urban Strategies, Inc.
Nashua Adult Learning Center
Nassau Community College
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers (NCATC)
National Council on Aging
National Fund for Workforce Solutions
National Immigration Forum
National League of Cities
National Rehabilitation Association
National Skills Coalition
New Orleans Career Center
New York City Employment and Training Coalition
New York State Tourism Industry Association
New Yorkers for Clean Power
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)
North Bay Leadership Council
North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards (NCAWDB)
North Central Counties Consortium
North Country Workforce Development Board
NORTH STAR EXEC CORP. Enviromental Economic Development
Northern Marianas Technical Institute
Northlands Job Corps Center
NOVAworks
NYATEP
Oakland County Michigan Works!
Oakland Literacy Council
Office of Adult and Career Services of Rochester City School District
Office of Employment and Training at Tompkins Workforce New York Career Center
Ohio Workforce Association
OIC of America, Inc.
Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology
Oneida County Workforce Development
Oswego County Workforce New York

Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Board
Partner4Work
Per Scholas
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors--National Association
PODER
PPI
ProGeny Place
Progressive Foam Technologies Inc.
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
Right Here, Right Now Project
Riverhawk Company, LP
Riverside County Workforce Development Board
Riverside Language Program, Inc.
Rochester City School District Office of Adult and Career Education Services
RochesterWorks
Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association (RMWDA)
San Diego Workforce Partnership
San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development
San Joaquin County WorkNet
Saving Our Sons & Sisters International (SOSSI)
ScaleLIT
Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc.
Schenectady County Connects
Second Start
SEMCA Michigan Works!
Settlers Hospitality Group
Sheet Metal Workers Local 9 Apprenticeship and Training Institute
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY
Skillspire
SkillSprints
Southeast Community Services
Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Board
Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.
Spring Vale Farms
St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board
Star Power Education
State Business Executives
State University of New York Exploring Emerging Technologies for Lifelong Learning and Success (#EmTech)
Stateline Manufacturing Alliance
Success Starts With Service, Inc.
Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing and Consumer Affairs
Sullivan County Workforce Development Board
Sunnyside Community Services
SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center
Teknimedia
Texas Association of Workforce Boards
The CARE Group, Inc.

The Corps Network
The Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc.
TINA'S Green Energy Solutions
Tipping Point Community
Tompkins County Workforce Development Board
Ulster YouthBuild, LLC (KAYB)
UNA-GP
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas
United Association of Plumber's Pipe Fitters Local 357
United Way of Central Iowa
United Way of Connecticut
United Ways of Texas
Upper Peninsula Michigan Works!
Ventura Adult and Continuing Education
Virginia Association of Workforce Directors
Voces
Washington State Library
West Central Job Partnership
West Michigan Works!
Willow Foundation
Wisconsin Workforce Development Association
Women Employed
Workforce Development Board Herkimer, Madison, Oneida & Chenango, Delaware & Otsego
Counties
Workforce Development Board of Mahoning and Columbiana Counties, Ohio LWDA 17
Workforce Development Board of Oswego County
Workforce Development Board of Rockland County
Workforce Development Board of Trumbull County
Workforce Development Boards HMO & CDO, NY
Workforce Development Institute (WDI)
Workforce Investment Board of Oneida Herkimer Madison Counties
Workforce Mid-South/Greater Memphis Local Workforce Board
Workforce TN
Year Up, Inc.
YouthBuild USA