

October 27, 2023

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

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

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

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 2leaarn-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)  
Statera 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