

SKILLS FOR GOOD JOBS

NOVEMBER 2016

An Agenda for the Next President



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.



Photo courtesy of Center for Employment Training, San Jose, California

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A CHALLENGE TO OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

Over the next four years there is an opportunity to put millions of Americans on a pathway toward a good paying, middle-skill job, and to do so in a manner that will bring greater capacity and profits to millions of U.S. companies, particularly small- and medium-size firms that need and want to hire locally to fill skilled positions. The Skills for Good Jobs Agenda offers concrete goals and proposals for the next president to achieve this vision.

Every day in our communities, working families look for opportunities to advance in the labor market and move into the middle class. At the same time, local businesses look for skilled workers ready to engage in ongoing learning as technologies change. These are challenges our next president can address, if guided by a tenet that helped drive U.S. economic growth in past decades: A national commitment to invest in all of America's people. We must reboot and reorient our nation's skills investments, including workforce development, adult education, English language instruction, career and technical education (CTE), and higher education. And we must do so in full conversation with students and workers, regional industries, and a mosaic of educators and service providers in our communities.

National Skills Coalition (NSC) represents this diversity of perspectives, drawing from experts in the worlds of business, labor, community colleges, community-based organizations, the public sector, and research and technical assistance organizations. These stakeholders are focused

on expanding access to skilled jobs that pay well and can support a family—or at least can provide a proven first rung to a middle-class career. Most of these jobs require a credential beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. Analyses find more of these middle-skill jobs in the current economy than jobs requiring a four-year college degree. And it is in this middle-skill space where employers struggle to find credentialed workers.

As a nation, the scale at which we prepare people for these essential middle-skill jobs pales in comparison to their role in the economy. Even more, the scale pales in comparison to what we spend on more traditional education pathways like moving full-time high school graduates directly into full-time bachelor's degree programs at public or private colleges or universities. This is a disservice to the majority of students and workers who—either by economic necessity or personal choice—will not pursue a full-time, four-year college degree right out of high school. It is also a lost opportunity to partner with thousands of companies that continue to struggle to find people to fill these middle-skill jobs.

We must take to scale our investments in preparing people for middle-skill jobs and reboot the systems that prepare people for these jobs. Failing to act will have implications not just for those workers and businesses directly impacted, but for the nation as a whole. The costs of failing to act are high and represent some of American voters' most deeply held concerns. But these are concerns we can address.

- **College debt:** We can slow the growth of borrowers who have amassed over \$1.2 trillion in debt.
- **Consumer information:** While we invest significantly in financing four-year degrees, consumers, educators, and policymakers have little to no information on the success of these schools in preparing students for careers of their choice. We can change this.
- **Perpetuating privilege:** We can reevaluate the inclination to target resources at those with the privilege to attend a four-year institution full time at the expense of a more diverse range of students and workers who seek alternate educational pathways.
- **Poverty:** We can create opportunity for those currently excluded from employment, including the 5.5 million youth who are not in school or working.
- **Economic mobility:** We can create advancement opportunities for millions of individuals in low-wage jobs with few prospects for promotion.
- **Stalled economic growth:** We can reboot growth, particularly for smaller local companies that provide nearly half of private sector employment and two-thirds of new private sector jobs.
- **Demographic shifts:** We can address the baby boomer retirement cliff and the increasingly central role of immigrants in the labor market.

Recent presidential administrations have made progress in preparing more Americans for middle-skill careers, and in helping more Americans who are currently working at low-wage jobs retrain or upskill for higher paying positions in their current companies or industries. Our next president can build on these prior efforts and completely recast how our country thinks about economic growth and the role of a better trained, better educated workforce in helping to drive prosperity.

The *Skills for Good Jobs Agenda* is actionable. It can win (and in some cases already has) bi-partisan support in Congress. The *Agenda's* goals are not small, but they are achievable if our next president makes these goals a political priority. The next president's cabinet secretaries can take immediate steps to begin to put the *Agenda* into action while the president negotiates larger-scale reforms with Congress. To that end, NSC has sketched out three levels of action:

- **First 100 Days:** Immediate actions that federal agencies can take within the purview of their regulatory, guidance, discretionary funding and convening functions.
- **First Year (2017-18):** Engagement with Congress on initial priorities for budget and appropriations, as well as pending reauthorizations of federal laws and programs that will require cooperation between Congress and the administration.
- **First Term (2017-2020):** Starting from day one, the next president should propose new efforts that will fundamentally change how America addresses these issues. The next president can begin to develop and deliver on these actionable, game changing proposals during the first term, in collaboration with Congress and a range of stakeholders from the student, worker, business and education and training communities.

SKILLS FOR GOOD JOBS AGENDA: THE BLUEPRINT

The *Skills for Good Jobs Agenda* includes eight visionary proposals as well as specific, measurable targets that can be achieved by the conclusion of the next president's first term (2020).



Photo courtesy of
Pima Community College,
Tucson, Arizona

Coordination and Accountability through a White House Skills Cabinet

Achieving the ambitious, long-term goals in this Agenda will require coordination across a range of federal programs and agencies. In the first 100 days, the next president should establish a White House Skills Cabinet based in the Office of the Vice President. The Skills Cabinet would ensure that federal agencies are working in a coordinated fashion and would track progress toward the eight measurable goals outlined below.

1. A National Infrastructure of Regional Industry Workforce Partnerships

If our nation's investments in skills are intended, in part, to ensure access to good jobs, then these investments must happen with the full involvement of local employers who create and hire for those jobs. These local employers comprise the regional industries upon which our future economic growth depends. We must invest in industry partnerships in every region, to add the voice of small- and medium-sized businesses to that of larger local firms in their sector, and to provide a platform whereby they can help develop workforce education and training strategies in partnership with local high schools, colleges, labor unions, workforce boards and community organizations.

2020 GOAL: America will have a national infrastructure of some 1,200 industry workforce partnerships in targeted sectors in every workforce planning region in the nation.

2. A Job-Driven Community College Compact for Today's Students

America's community and technical colleges play a critical and growing role in ensuring workers and employers have the skills to compete. But our federal policies are not structured to support these institutions or the students they serve. We've treated community colleges as gap-fillers between the traditional K-12 and higher education systems even as more students pass through their halls, and more local employers are engaged by their technical training programs. It's time to establish a new federal policy that invests in partnerships between community colleges and community employers, supports programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, and allows today's students to obtain skills for the jobs of tomorrow.

2020 GOAL: America will have a new federal policy—the Community College Compact—that provides dedicated financial aid for working students, industry-responsive investments in career and technical education programs, support services for working students, and accountability measures that track employment and wage gains to ensure that investments lead to results.

3. One Working Apprentice for Every Four Full-Time College Students

We have the greatest higher education system in the world—that is, for those who want to be a full-time student pursuing a traditional four-year degree. But for those who need to work and earn a living, or who would rather learn on the job versus just in a classroom, our education policies allow fewer options than countries where apprenticeship and work-based learning are a common pathway to a skilled career. Apprenticeship allows workers to support themselves and their families while earning a license or postsecondary credential. Some call apprenticeship “the ‘other college’—without the debt.” Yet we have barely one working apprentice for every 40 full-time college students—a fraction of the wage-earning options available to young people and working adults in other parts of the world.

2020 GOAL: The U.S. will institute new policies—directed at both students/workers and businesses—to support the development of five million new apprentices, the equivalent of one working apprentice for every four full-time college students.

4. An Upskilling Guarantee for America’s Frontline Workers

Tens of millions of hard working people in frontline, entry level jobs have never had the opportunity to refresh or upgrade their skills as their industries change around them. Some may not have the foundational literacy and numeracy skills to enter a community college or training program even if they had a chance to do so. As a nation we strive to give more students a pathway to college or credentials. But what about the millions of working men and women who want the option to raise their skills and incomes, but who cannot because we’ve done virtually nothing to help them keep their reading, math or language skills up to date? We should offer every working age person a basic upskilling guarantee: The chance to improve the foundational academic skills needed to train for a higher skilled job.

2020 GOAL: Six million individuals will be able to use the resources available through a new Upskilling Guarantee to build their foundational literacy or numeracy skills and obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

5. Integrating America’s Growing Immigrant Workforce

Immigrants represent more than one in seven American workers, but the absence of a national immigrant integration policy has prevented many from fully contributing to the economy. Comprehensive immigration reform, if passed, will provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. But simply providing individuals with a work permit doesn’t guarantee full economic integration and participation. Any immigration policy must be accompanied by a forward thinking skills strategy that is inclusive of U.S. born workers as well as newcomers. We can’t leave talent on the table, and that means making sure that every new American has a realistic chance to learn English, bolster their foundational skills, and pursue occupational training that will allow them to earn a family sustaining wage.

2020 GOAL: Six million immigrant youth and adults will have expanded access to English language and skill-building opportunities leading to improved employment outcomes.

6. Welfare to Careers: A Skills-Based Approach to Poverty Reduction

It has been said that the best anti-poverty program is a job. A better anti-poverty program is a good job, or even better, a career—specifically, a career that can support a family and provides opportunities for advancement. We should align and strengthen our nation’s public assistance programs to provide meaningful education and training opportunities, so that low-income individuals who are able to work can get and keep family supporting jobs.

2020 GOAL: Guarantee that anyone receiving federal public assistance can choose to participate in high-quality training to obtain an industry-recognized credential. Provide sufficient supports to enable those who are able to work to sustain employment over time.

7. Building a Diverse Workforce to Rebuild our Nation’s Infrastructure

As we invest in the country’s roads, bridges, rail and public transit; expand affordable broadband; advance energy infrastructure; and improve dams and levees, we must simultaneously invest in the skilled workforce necessary to build this vital infrastructure. Each billion dollars spent on infrastructure produces between 13,000 and 27,800 jobs. But if we want this job creation to pay off for American families and the economy as a whole, we must build a diverse pipeline of workers with the skills to access these in-demand opportunities.

2020 GOAL: A diverse set of three million new and existing workers will be trained for middle-skill infrastructure jobs.

8. Smart Data for a 21st Century Skilled Workforce

For many Americans, education is one of the biggest investments of time and money they will ever make. Car consumers can find out how well different makes and models perform and comparison shop to get a good value. Data is available to help make that decision. But students and workers trying to upgrade their skills don’t have information to comparison shop between schools and programs. Similarly, federal and state leaders don’t have information to make sure that tax dollars are supporting programs that actually help people get good jobs and grow our economy. We can take action to make sure people—from students to governors to small business owners—have the information they need to prosper in a 21st century economy.

2020 GOAL: All states and the federal government will have data systems in place to measure how well education and training programs are preparing skilled workers for the 21st century economy.

SKILLS FOR GOOD JOBS AGENDA: DETAILED PROPOSALS



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BEST Corp., Boston,
Massachusetts

Coordination and Accountability through a White House Skills Cabinet

The *Skills for Good Jobs Agenda* includes a set of ambitious, long-term goals that will require coordination across a range of federal programs and agencies. As such, it requires leadership at the highest levels of the administration. In the first 100 days, the next president should establish a White House Skills Cabinet based in the Office of the Vice President. The Skills Cabinet would ensure that federal agencies are working in a coordinated fashion to pursue the *Skills for Good Jobs Agenda* and would provide oversight in tracking progress toward the Agenda's eight measurable goals.

This Skills Cabinet should include, at a minimum, secretaries of all human capital and human service agencies (Departments of Labor (DOL), Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Agriculture (USDA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Veteran Affairs (VA), Justice (DOJ)), along with agencies that will be generating new jobs requiring new skilled workers (Departments of Commerce (DOC), Transportation DOT), and Energy (DOE)). The Skills Cabinet will coordinate interagency working groups required to implement the policy reforms called for in this *Agenda*, and will compile the necessary data and evaluation to report on the progress of its implementation to the president. In addition, it can ensure that a coordinated skills strategy accompanies any major job creation investments that the next president pursues in a particular sector, such as infrastructure or healthcare. These job creation efforts can only deliver economic payoff to individuals and the nation if there is a coordinated cross-agency effort to deliver a skilled workforce.

Fortunately there is a precedent that the next president can build on when forming the White House Skills Cabinet. When Vice President Biden launched the Job-Driven Training Initiative in 2014, he released *Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity*, an effort by thirteen agencies and the White House to review federal training programs and opportunities for alignment and coordination. Later that year, the White House announced the launch of the Skills Working Group, an effort to build on and expand existing coordination efforts identified in the report. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez convened the first meeting of the Working Group along with secretaries, directors, and senior leadership from the National Economic Council, Office of Management and Budget, DOC, USDA, Department of the Interior (DOI), DOE, DOT, Defense (DOD), VA, ED, HHS, HUD, DOJ, and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Lessons learned from this working group that should be incorporated into the design of the White House Skills Cabinet include the importance of:

- **White House leadership.** Leadership within the vice president's office helps ensure that all agencies are full invested in and accountable for the administration's skills strategy.
- **Active representation by cabinet secretaries.** Attendance by agency heads at monthly meeting ensures leadership and accountability within each agency.
- **Formal infrastructure.** A formal, staffed infrastructure, goals, and performance expectations will help ensure positive, measurable outcomes in efforts to close the middle-skill gap.

1

A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF REGIONAL INDUSTRY WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS



Photo courtesy of
Baltimore Workforce
Fundors Collaborative,
Baltimore, Maryland

- > If our nation's investments in skills are intended, in part, to ensure access to good jobs, then these investments must happen with the full involvement of local employers who create and hire for those jobs. These local employers comprise the regional industries upon which our future economic growth depends. We must invest in industry partnerships in every region, to add the voice of small- and medium-sized businesses to that of larger local firms in their sector, and to provide a platform whereby they can help develop workforce education and training strategies in partnership with local high schools, colleges, labor unions, workforce boards and community organizations.

2020 GOAL: America will have a national infrastructure of some 1,200 industry partnerships in targeted sectors in every workforce planning region in the nation (300+). These partnerships will prioritize the new involvement of thousands of local companies—particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises—in the development of education, training and worker advancement strategies. Through these partnerships, companies will engage with the education and training providers who prepare people for employment, upskilling and promotion within that industry, by sharing vital information about employer demand and industry opportunity. These partnerships will connect current and future workers with the education, training, and supports necessary to obtain good middle-skill jobs.¹

THE CHALLENGE: For education and training providers to respond to employer needs and serve students well, they need employer guidance and participation. In many communities, there has been no structure for this engagement. Too often, individual programs have sought employer involvement without coordination, causing duplication and employer fatigue.

Over the past decade, some communities have developed industry workforce partnerships, also known as sector partnerships. These partnerships have effectively brought local companies—particularly small- and medium-sized employers—into discussions about targeting education and training resources. Federal policymakers believe in the value of these partnerships for local employers and for students who more successfully secure jobs and increase their incomes. As such, they reauthorized the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to require workforce planning regions to identify in-demand industries and to support multiple sector partnerships targeting these industries.² However, WIOA does not provide dedicated funding to create, sustain, or update these partnerships. Likewise, proposals to require these partnerships in other federal

programs provide no dedicated funding.³ Without this funding, there is no way to ensure these partnerships exist in all communities, or that they are robust enough to guide a range of education and training programs in their region.

First 100 Days

Charge the newly formed White House Skills Cabinet with overseeing progress toward 2020 goal of 1,200 industry partnerships. Charge the White House Skills Cabinet with overseeing annual reporting by the Department of Labor (DOL) on the number of sector partnerships in each workforce development area, their industries, the number of employers who are active participants, and measures of the effectiveness in serving employers and workers.

Reinvent the Center for Workforce and Industry Partnerships (CWIP). Reorganize this DOL initiative as an interagency Center including staff from the Departments of Education (ED), Commerce (DOC), Transportation (DOT), and Energy (DOE). Housed at the DOL, CWIP should coordinate the agencies' engagement of sector partnerships, provide technical assistance to state and local sector partnership programs, promote the growth of partnerships, and report on results, including detailed outcomes for workers and business. The CWIP should also establish an advisory council of private and public sector leaders to guide its actions.

Clarify expectations about sector partnerships as states implement WIOA. Instruct DOL to issue guidance that clearly affirms the expectation that each regional planning area (which may consist of one or more local workforce development areas) is required to support at least two sector partnerships. In addition, request that DOL's monitoring of WIOA implementation include tracking states' progress in establishing sector partnerships. The administration should also direct DOL to revise its guidance for state plans to reflect WIOA's requirement that states and regions support multiple sector partnerships in each planning region.

1 For more information on industry partnerships, also referred to as sector partnerships, please visit <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/federal-policy/sector-partnerships> and www.nfwsolutions.org.

2 Under its second-term Job-Driven Training Action Plan, the Obama Administration made regional industry partnerships a priority element in awarding competitive federal grants.

3 For example, the Obama Administration's Blueprint for Career and Technical Education reform under the Perkins Act.

Encourage recipients of Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) funds to collaborate with sector partnerships. Instruct ED and DOL to disseminate joint guidance on how local Perkins funds recipients can benefit from collaborating with regional sector partnerships. The administration should also support changes to the Perkins Act to require that state plans describe how Career and Technical Education (CTE) will support state efforts to develop and implement sector partnerships, and require postsecondary grant recipients to coordinate with sector partnerships in their area, when they exist.

First Year (2017-18)

Develop a new three-year, \$276 million grant initiative to support the development and growth of approximately 1,200 employer-led regional industry workforce partnerships. The initiative should be funded through H1-B visa fees, which are under the jurisdiction of the DOL and which will be immediately available to the administration for expenditure as of October 1, 2017. These fees are paid to the federal government by industry as part of its efforts to recruit skilled workers from overseas to fill open positions. It is appropriate to prioritize these funds for the creation of a standing industry-based infrastructure to help local companies develop home-grown strategies for filling these skilled positions with people who are trained and educated in their communities. DOL should administer the initiative, which would include:

- *\$36 million for planning grants to fund the formation of partnerships, the analysis of regional skill gaps, and the development of a plan to close the gaps.* Each planning grant should be up to \$30,000 and require matching funds from private or other non-federal sources. Eligible applicants should consist of local workforce development boards. However the convening organization identified in the application may be another type of organization such as a chamber of commerce, economic development council, labor management partnership, community college, or community-based organization, among others. In order to ensure coordination across

each state, the Governor or Governor's designee should sign off on applications from within the state.

- *\$240 million for 2-year implementation grants for partnerships that have successfully completed their sector plan.* Each implementation grant should be up to \$200,000 to pay for the costs of the partnership. Again, the Governor or Governor's designee should sign off on applications from within the state.

First Term (2017-20)

Support congressionally authorized, comprehensive, sustained funding to make sector partnerships America's way of doing business. The administration should request congressional action to support an ongoing funding mechanism for regional industry partnerships that provides resources to every workforce planning region in the country. The funding mechanism could be linked to an employer-based tax, with an offset for employer contributions to the partnership. Alternatively, it could be linked to state or local matching funds. For example, typically the effective employer tax rate for the Federal Unemployment Tax Act is .6 percent on the first \$7,000 of employee wages. If that rate were increased by just .03 points (\$2.10 per employee) to .63 percent it would generate approximately \$315 million in annual revenue. Employers could claim a credit against the additional tax for contributions to sector partnerships. Through a combination of actual tax revenue and employer contributions, approximately \$315 million would still be raised. Some of the funds would support a line item in the DOL budget to fund the CWIP.

As part of the legislation authorizing funding for regional industry partnerships and the CWIP, the advisory council guiding the CWIP should be codified. The legislation should also codify information to be reported by DOL under the White House Skills Cabinet's oversight to Congress as described above. This includes information on the number of sector partnerships in each workforce development area, their industries, the number of employers who are active participants, and measures of the effectiveness in serving employers and workers.

2

A JOB-DRIVEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMPACT FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS



Photo courtesy of
Pima Community College,
Tucson, Arizona

- > America's community and technical colleges play a critical and growing role in ensuring workers and employers have the skills to compete. But our federal policies are not structured to support these institutions or the students they serve. We've treated community colleges as gap-fillers between the traditional K-12 and higher education systems even as more students pass through their halls, and more local employers are engaged by their technical training programs. It's time to establish a new federal policy that invests in partnerships between community colleges and community employers, supports programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, and allows today's students to obtain skills for the jobs of tomorrow.

2020 GOAL: By 2020, America will have a new federal policy—the Community College Compact—that provides dedicated financial aid for working students, industry-responsive investments in career and technical education (CTE) programs, support services for working students, and accountability measures that track employment and wage gains to ensure that investments lead to results.

THE CHALLENGE: An increased focus on skills and credentials has driven significant changes in the characteristics of the typical college student, particularly as working adults enroll at community colleges part-time to earn their first postsecondary credential, or to otherwise engage in training to advance within their current companies or industries. More than a quarter of all students work full time. Many enroll in short-term occupational training at community and technical colleges while balancing work and family obligations. Because of how they engage in education and the types of programs they pursue, few of them qualify for federal financial aid under the current Higher Education Act (HEA), because the policy is based on an outdated profile of America’s college students.

At the same time, employers—including small- and medium-sized businesses—look to the nation’s community and technical colleges to prepare local residents for in-demand middle-skill occupations. However, nationally, only one-third of Perkins funding (the primary federal CTE program) supports community and technical college programs (the majority supports high school programs). And in many states, the percentage supporting postsecondary is far lower. As such, community and technical colleges have no dedicated federal support for high-quality, industry-responsive training.

While HEA and Perkins can be improved to address some of these challenges, America ultimately needs a new policy dedicated to supporting the pivotal role of community colleges in training local workers for middle-skill jobs. The administration should develop a new Community College Compact to be administered by a new Office of Community and Technical Colleges at the Department of Education (ED). The Compact should be industry responsive, include institutional support for community colleges, provide

financial aid and other supports for today’s working students, and measures outcomes. There are interim steps the administration can take over the next four years to position the nation for this new Compact.

First 100 Days

Create a Community College Compact working group within the newly formed White House Skills Cabinet.

Charge the Secretary of Education with coordinating an interagency working group tasked with planning, stakeholder engagement, and other activities that support the development of the Community College Compact. The working group should include leaders from, at a minimum, ED, the Departments of Labor (DOL), and Health and Human Services (HHS).

Continue to test financial aid models that are responsive to today’s students and economy.

Instruct ED to continue existing Pell experimental sites, including those relating to short-term credentials and competency-based education, and increase technical assistance for participating schools to improve participation rates. Disseminate results from existing sites and develop policy proposals to reform the Pell program to support these models.

Encourage greater alignment between CTE and workforce systems.

Instruct ED and DOL to issue guidance to secondary and postsecondary CTE providers on opportunities for engagement in state and local workforce development strategies, like sector partnerships and career pathways models, including those that are implemented under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

First Year (2017-18)

Develop a new title under HEA focused on community colleges and working students.

Work with Congress to develop reauthorization proposals that create a new title focused on working students and community colleges. The title should expand financial aid for short-term credentials and competency-based programs, improve data collection and reporting, strengthen connections to local and regional industries, improve academic supports for low-skilled individuals, and modernize the federal work-study program.

Strengthen support for community college CTE through Perkins Act reauthorization. Building on recent congressional efforts, introduce proposals for Perkins Act reauthorization to enhance the role of postsecondary CTE. Establish minimum state allocations for postsecondary institutions, invest in industry partnerships, align postsecondary performance measures with outcome indicators under WIOA, and expand access to work-based learning opportunities.

Expand and improve investments in community college CTE. As part of the administration's first budget request, call for increased funding for Perkins state formula grants by at least \$500 million (to \$1.6 billion) to bring in line with historic investment levels. Require that states use this additional funding to develop career pathways that align secondary and postsecondary CTE programs with local and regional industry demands. Also in the budget request, include language to expand eligibility for Pell grants to short-term industry-recognized occupational credentials, and include additional funding to support expansion.

First Term (2017-20)

Work with Congress to establish a new industry responsive Community College Compact. Incorporate the four principles outlined below and fund the Compact at least at the level of current institutional support for community and technical colleges under the Perkins Act and HEA; and the level of student aid (including Pell) currently available for community college students, with an increase to cover the expansion of student eligibility and additional supports.

- ***\$12 billion in tuition aid for workers and working students:*** Today's financial aid policies don't match the realities of today's students. Support debt free tuition assistance for working adults and other non-traditional students, including individuals enrolled on a part-time basis or in short-term occupational training and competency-based programs. Funding should be provided at a level that is at least consistent with the current \$12 billion in Pell investments that go to community and technical college students.
- ***\$500 million annually to support business-community college partnerships:*** Industry partnerships ensure that

local training prepares workers for local jobs. But we aren't investing in these models at a scale to sustain economic competitiveness. The Community College Compact should invest in building community and technical college capacity through business-led partnerships. Funding for these partnerships should be at least \$500 million a year, consistent with annual funding levels authorized under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program, and should encourage collaboration with community-based organizations, secondary schools, workforce boards, unions and other stakeholders.

- ***\$500 million in dedicated annual funding for academic supports and acceleration strategies:*** Many working students lack the basic academic skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and training, while others need support services in order to balance school, work, and other obligations. The Community College Compact should ensure that financial aid for these students is sufficient to cover developmental education where necessary to prepare them for postsecondary work, and can be extended to include living expenses. The new policy should also provide dedicated funding through a Career Pathways grant program of at least \$500 million annually to support the development of integrated education and training programs and other strategies that can accelerate time to completion. Funding should also be allocated to support career counseling and career awareness activities that will enable non-traditional students to find the right programs for their life and employment needs.
- ***Measure outcomes to ensure program quality:*** Investments in postsecondary education pay off, both for students and businesses, but we lack detailed outcomes data on individual programs that would help us understand what is working and what is not. A new federal policy for community colleges should include employment, earnings, and credential attainment metrics so we can measure return on investment and support program improvements when necessary.

3

ONE WORKING APPRENTICE FOR EVERY FOUR FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS



Photo courtesy of
Employ Milwaukee,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

- We have the greatest higher education system in the world—that is, for those who want to be a full-time student pursuing a traditional four-year degree. But for those who need to work and earn a living, or who would rather learn on the job versus just in a classroom, our education policies allow fewer options than countries where apprenticeship and work-based learning are a common pathway to a skilled career. Apprenticeship allows workers to support themselves and their families while earning a license or postsecondary credential. Some call apprenticeship “the ‘other college’—without the debt.” Yet we have barely one working apprentice for every 40 full-time college students—a fraction of the wage-earning options available to young people and working adults in other parts of the world.

2020 GOAL: The U.S. will have instituted new policies—directed at both students/workers and businesses—that support the development of five million new apprentices, the equivalent of one working apprentice for every 4 full-time college students.

THE CHALLENGE: The U.S. ranks far behind competitor nations in how we use apprenticeship and other forms of work-based learning to prepare students and workers for good-paying, middle-skill careers. Germany and the United Kingdom average more than one apprentice for every two full-time college students; the U.S. has one apprentice for every 40 full-time college students. That’s because our education policies favor students who can sit in a high school or college classroom full-time. We disadvantage students who would rather work for a local employer, earn an income while learning skills on the job, and continue to study (even for college credit) while they are promoted and their wages continue to rise.

Our policies have also not done enough to help businesses who have open positions to expand work-based learning offerings at their companies. This is particularly true in communities where applicants with limited skills or work experience will need additional support to ensure their success on the job site. In addition, the incentives we offer for companies to create these work-based learning opportunities are typically not geared to the needs of small- and medium-sized employers. These businesses incur costs and take on financial and operational risks each time they hire and initially train a new apprentice. While some companies can and do absorb these additional costs, others (especially small- and medium employers) may find those costs difficult to carry on their own, particularly if the working learner can be hired away by another (often larger) firm once he or she has gained valuable experience.

We need policies on both the labor supply and labor demand sides to put us on a pathway toward enrolling one new working learner for every four full-time college students (or five million apprentices compared to our current census of twenty million full-time college students).

We need to diversify the types of students and workers who can benefit from these earn-and-learn strategies. Many will eventually enroll in postsecondary education while they are working, so we should make it easier for them to do so. We should invest in intermediaries to create these options in new industries, and provide both technical assistance and better targeted financial support to help small as well as large firms participate.

First 100 Days

Create a Registered Apprenticeship/Work-Based Learning working group within the newly formed White House Skills Cabinet. Direct participating agency leaders from, at a minimum, the Departments of Labor (DOL), Education (ED), Commerce (DOC), Energy (DOE), Transportation (DOT), and Health and Human Services (HHS) to meet with key stakeholders from the business, labor, education, workforce and anti-poverty communities to confirm an administration commitment to pursuing the five million apprentices and work-based learners goal within the first term. Additional activities should include:

- **Identify private sector resources.** Direct the working group to meet with the corporate giving and philanthropic communities to identify means for leveraging private-sector resources to match current federal investments in such efforts, particularly around the diversification of work-based learning students and firms.
- **Establish means to report outcomes.** As one of the first responsibilities of this working group, instruct relevant federal agencies to establish means—in addition to the current Registered Apprenticeships Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS)—to collect and annually report on the number and composition of people in registered and unregistered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and other formalized wage-earning, work-based learning. Establish an effort to better measure the *outcomes* of apprenticeship/work-based learning programs as a means to assess their quality versus relying on *process-based* assessments, such as the quality of their registration application or clock hour requirements.

Outcome metrics should include credential attainment, employment outcomes, wages—all of which can be disaggregated by types of apprentices/workers—as well as effectiveness in filling vacant jobs and reducing turnover in skilled occupations along with other industry/ employer needs.

Develop guidance to improve apprenticeship registration process. Direct DOL and ED to develop joint guidance on improving the apprenticeship registration process. This guidance should ensure the process is more streamlined and flexible. It should support the ability to use competencies and flexible supervising arrangements as the proposed means to move apprentices toward demonstrated competencies (versus relying exclusively on clock hours and ratios). The registration process should also be made more business friendly through greater involvement of intermediary organizations to help navigate the registration process. Finally, the registration process should outline outcome based metrics in order to measure the relative quality of registered programs (see above).

Establish a working group to expand opportunities for in-school youth. Within ED, establish a new working group focused on options under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) to expand youth apprenticeship, whereby more in-school youth could earn their diplomas while pursuing a wage-earning, registered apprenticeship.

Move the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium to ED. Bring the Consortium into the Department of Education as one of the responsibilities of the new Office of Community and Technical Colleges (see Community College Compact proposal).

Promote apprenticeship as an allowable Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) activity. Authorize HHS to issue new guidance on use of apprenticeship and wage-earning learning as a fulfillment of required state activities under current TANF regulations.

Target grants to support diversification of the apprenticeship pipeline. Target likely congressional investments in apprenticeship (estimated to be \$90-100 million in FY17)

toward grants to support diversification of the registered apprenticeship pipeline, with a focus on out-of-school youth, low-income adults, women, survivors of domestic violence, veterans, workers underrepresented in work-based learning programming, and those with employment barriers.

First Year (2017-18)

Establish new regional registered apprenticeship and funded on-the-job training strategies. As part of a new initiative to build a national infrastructure of regional industry partnerships (see Industry Partnership proposal), DOL's Office of Apprenticeship should provide additional technical assistance to help these partnerships establish new regional registered apprenticeship and funded on-the-job training strategies to increase registered apprentices and wage-earning learners served under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This network can work with companies and educators to create work-based learning slots at more firms, including assisting with training, support services and even initial employer-of-record assistance.

Codify and fund the Office of Apprenticeship (OA). In the administration's FY18 budget, codify OA as a national project with an annual appropriated budget of \$175 million (see below).

Increase investments in apprenticeship expansion and diversification. Work with Congress to increase investment in apprenticeship expansion and diversification to \$175 million under the FY18 budget, with \$100 million to support the Work-Based Learning Support Fund (see below), \$50 million in state-directed grants, and \$25 million for employer subsidies (see below).

Promote work-based learning in Perkins and Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorizations. Work with Congress to develop a new emphasis on work-based learning (including registered apprenticeship) as part of the reauthorization of both the Perkins Act and HEA.

Expand work-based learning opportunities for welfare recipients. Work with Congress to develop new options for registered apprenticeship and wage-earning learning as part of the reauthorization of TANF, so that more working



Photo courtesy of
BEST Corp., Boston,
Massachusetts

mothers can earn a credential and develop a career while working part- or full-time.

First Term (2017-20)

To further attract and assist new industries and businesses, including smaller businesses:

- *Provide subsidies to smaller firms to help cover initial costs of hire, orientation and training-related instruction of new apprentices.* Employers would be eligible for up to \$25,000 in subsidies for expanding or starting registered apprenticeship programs, based on the number of apprentices in the program year to year. This fund would offset initial recruitment, screening, and orientation costs. Employers could access upfront subsidies, which have been cited by small- and medium-sized employers as more effective in addressing these initial costs. This would spur more hiring than tax credits, effectively addressing long-term costs incurred by running an apprenticeship program.
- *Redesign a New Work-Based Learning Tax Credit.* Work with Congress to replace the \$1 billion Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) with the Work-Based

Learning Opportunity Tax Credit. This business tax incentive would reward companies that hire individuals with particular needs. Eligible costs would be those incurred by companies that invest in on-site training or pay the tuition of such employees who are learning off site at a community college or other training institution, who are pursuing that training as part of an apprenticeship or other formalized work-based learning program.

To further diversify the students and workers transitioning into a full-time, wage-earning apprenticeship or work-based learning opportunity, create a new Work-Based Learning Support Fund. Work with Congress and relevant agencies to establish a Work-Based Learning Support Fund to better assist young adults not in school as well as adults with limited work experience as they transition into employer-sponsored registered apprenticeship or work-based learning opportunities. The fund would be supported by congressional appropriations of \$100 million annually. The Fund should be based out of OA, HHS, or jointly managed. It should be jointly overseen by agencies represented in the Registered Apprenticeship/Work-Based Learning working group.

This fund would build upon the lessons of many current pre-apprenticeship efforts to diversify the apprenticeship pipeline, while at the same time incorporating feedback from employers about the need for greater attention to both the newly placed apprentice and the business *after* hire during the critical first 6-12 months of employment. The fund would bring together a range of services that ensure newly placed apprentices are fully work-ready and that they are receiving the necessary supports and training to succeed on the job during the first critical months of their employment. It would also ensure that the risks taken on by their new employers are minimized in order to make it easier for businesses—particularly smaller firms—to give these new workers a chance to build a new career while working. As such, the Work-Based Learning Support Fund would provide services during three critical phases:

■ ***Pre-Employment (up to four months)***

- Grants to community-based organizations, labor management partnerships, or industry-based intermediaries to provide traditional pre-apprenticeship services to aspiring apprentices, including skills training, work attire and necessary tools for the job, wrap-around services such as transportation and childcare assistance, and job placement assistance.
- Grant funding should be used to support a mentor for each apprentice over the duration of services. Mentors and mentees should receive training to ensure a successful relationship. Funds should support the mentorship program and mentors' time commitment.
- In addition to funding granted to community-based organizations, the Work-Based Learning Support Fund should support national technical assistance to ensure program success in reaching underrepresented populations. Resources should be set aside to build a network of registered apprenticeship support providers, with leveraged support from philanthropic partners to create a community of practice around these diversification strategies.

■ ***Early Employment (up to six months)***

- Ongoing case management and support services provided by assisting organization to the new apprentice. This could include a continuation of services provided during the pre-employment phase as well as additional training to succeed in non-work-related responsibilities, such as financial literacy training, time management and studying skills.
- Continued skills training conducted either on- or off-site by the assisting organization in collaboration with the new apprentice's employer.
- Additional mentorship and retention supports for participants and targeted training for frontline managers, journey level workers with whom the apprentice works, and human resource representatives within the business where the apprentice is placed.
- Where appropriate, the assisting organization can serve as the new apprentice's employer of record, providing publicly subsidized wages and benefits for up to six months before transitioning the new apprentice to the employer's payroll.

■ ***Unsubsidized Apprenticeship (after six months on the job)***

- If the apprentice has completed the six-month on-the-job transition, the company would formally hire the apprentice at the legally required wage with full employee benefits.
- Company would continue to qualify for supports and tax incentives above for continued investment in apprentice's learning, as long as the worker continues to receive prescribed wage increases as skills and credentials are acquired per the approved apprenticeship plan.
- The assisting organization should continue to work with the fully hired apprentice to ensure his/her successful completion of the full apprenticeship program, including providing mentorship and retention supports.

4

AN UPSKILLING GUARANTEE FOR AMERICA'S FRONTLINE WORKERS

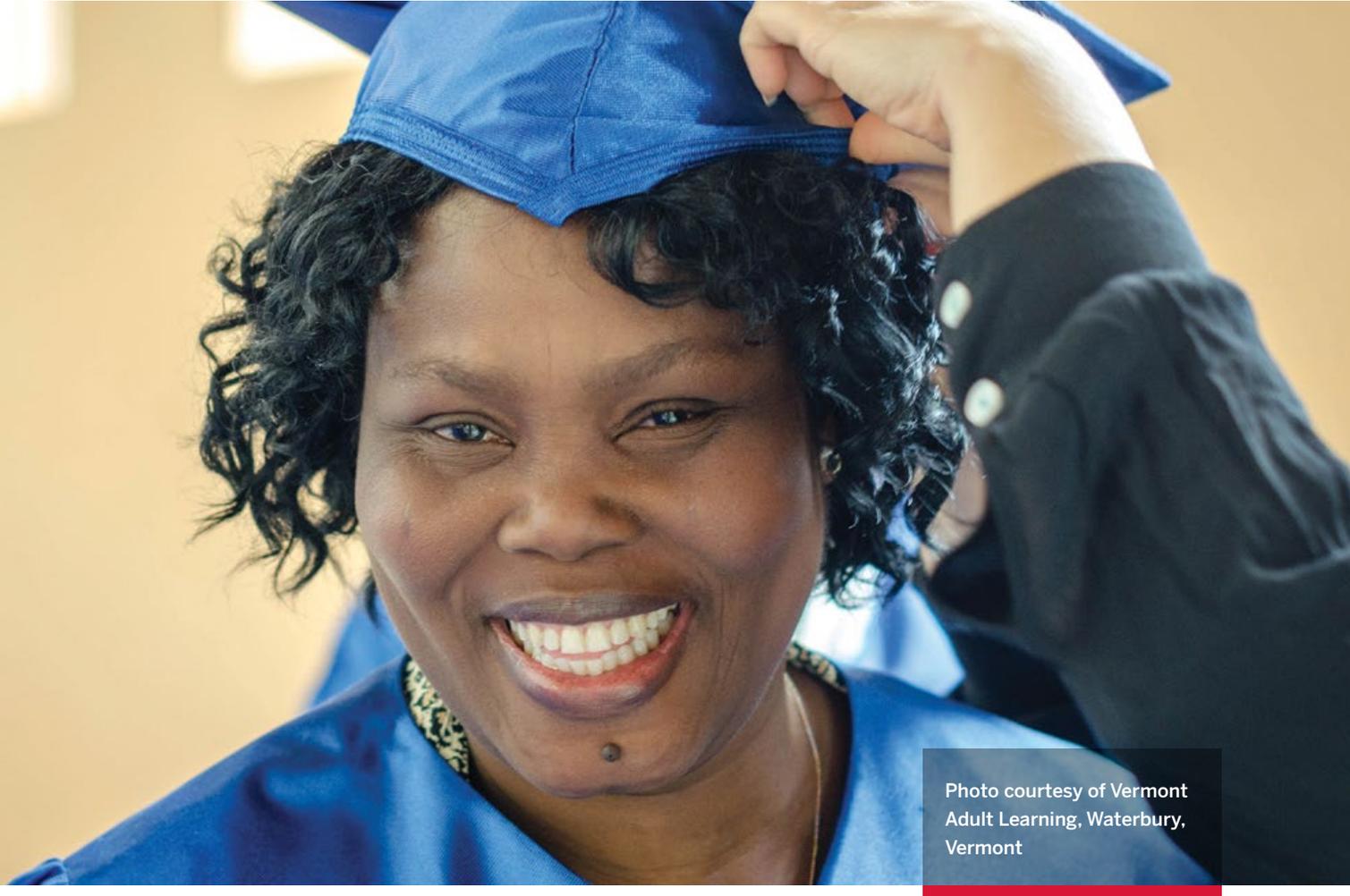


Photo courtesy of Vermont
Adult Learning, Waterbury,
Vermont

- Tens of millions of hard working people in frontline, entry level jobs have never had the opportunity to refresh or upgrade their skills as their industries change around them. Some may not have the foundational literacy and numeracy skills to enter a community college or training program even if they had a chance to do so. As a nation we strive to give more students a pathway to college or credentials. But what about the millions of working men and women who want the option to raise their skills and incomes, but who cannot because we've done virtually nothing to help them keep their reading, math or language skills up to date? We should offer every working age person a basic upskilling guarantee: The chance to improve the foundational academic skills needed to train for a higher skilled job.

2020 GOAL: By 2020, six million individuals will be able to use the resources available through a new Upskilling Guarantee to build their foundational literacy or numeracy skills and obtain a recognized postsecondary credential. There are different avenues for workers to build their occupational skills, and frontline workers with low literacy and numeracy skills need meaningful access to a variety of them. As such, an Upskilling Guarantee would not only increase investments in adult literacy programs. It would also critically assess all of our federal skills investments to ensure individuals can improve their foundational academic skills in the context of the education or training that supports their employment goals. It would provide the navigational guidance and ancillary support they need to pursue the pathway of their choice.

THE CHALLENGE: The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey of Adult Skills finds that there are 36 million working age Americans with limited foundational academic skills. Two-thirds of these individuals are currently employed. Without key occupational skills, they aren't able to move up the ladder to fill in-demand middle-skill positions, and earn greater economic security for themselves and their families. But too many don't have the foundational literacy and numeracy skills needed to enroll in middle-skill training because we have not made good on our longstanding promise that every American has the right to a solid education in the fundamentals - fundamentals that would enable hardworking frontline workers to refresh and expand their academic skills while upgrading their occupational skills.

Further adding to this challenge, we have significantly underfunded the federal programs that are specifically targeted at helping individuals with low literacy and numeracy skills improve their employment outcomes. At the same time, we have not thought intentionally about how our full range of skills policies can be adapted to allow frontline workers to build their literacy or numeracy skills at the same time that they are pursuing an educational pathway that is right for their employment goals, whether its workforce training, an apprenticeship program, career and technical education, higher education, or safety net programs that support skill building.

First 100 Days

Create an Upskilling Guarantee working group within the newly created White House Skills Cabinet. Charge the Secretary of Education with coordinating the working group and leading interagency planning and activities that support the development and implementation of the Upskilling Guarantee. The working group should include, at a minimum, secretaries from the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Agriculture (USDA). The working groups should be charged with measuring progress toward the 2020 goal that at least six million adults with foundational skill needs will receive access to high-quality education and training services each year across all federal safety net and skills programs leading to improved employment outcomes.

Affirm and strengthen states' obligations and opportunities related to foundational skills under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Direct the Departments of Labor and Education to issue guidance that details how WIOA can be used to support foundational skill development in the context of occupational training. Examples include co-enrollment of participants in Title I workforce and Title II adult education programs; implementation of career pathways that are meaningfully structured to be inclusive of individuals with foundational skill needs; implementation of sector partnerships that include on ramps for low-skilled individuals; and use of innovative partnerships with community-based organizations and others equipped to identify and effectively refer participants into the public workforce system.

Expand Performance Partnerships Pilots (P3) to help states better serve adults with foundational skill needs and inform future investments. Expansion beyond the P3 program's focus on opportunity youth to include working age adults would allow states to apply for waivers to blend federal funding streams to better serve adults with foundational skills needs. It would also allow the administration to identify opportunities to change policy. For example, states may seek to align Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) funds with WIOA Title II, or coordinate Refugee Matching



Photo courtesy of Center for Employment Training, San Jose, California

Grant programming with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services. Understanding how states hope to use waivers to improve services, and gathering data on outcomes of waivers, can help the administration encourage further innovation through policy or discretionary funding.

First Year (2017-18)

Ensure that TANF reauthorization strengthens the ability to help adults with foundational skill needs obtain postsecondary credentials. One-third of TANF recipients lack a high school diploma, and upskilling opportunities are essential for helping them access family supporting careers. Specific changes should include eliminating restrictions on education and training, and expanding the types of activities supported through TANF funds, including integrated education and training models and pre-apprenticeship programs. Provide dedicated funding to support proven strategies—such as sector partnerships, career pathways, and work-based learning models—that are effective in serving individuals with limited foundational skills.

Work with Congress to improve the SNAP E&T program’s ability to provide credential attainment opportunities for individuals with foundational skills needs. Among SNAP recipients, 40 percent lack a high school diploma. As part of the reauthorization of the Farm Bill include new pilot grants under SNAP E&T that target services to specific subpopulations for whom key barriers must be addressed in order to improve employment outcomes, such as individuals with low literacy or numeracy skills or those without a high school diploma.

Work with Congress to develop within the context of Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization a new Career Pathways program for learners with foundational skill needs. Use reauthorization of HEA to create and fund a \$500 million Career Pathways grant program to support the entry and progress of learners with foundational skill needs into postsecondary education. In particular, such a grant program should: incentivize the development of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that are developed in collaboration between eligible institutions

and community-based organizations, including WIOA Title II adult education providers; provide support for pathway navigator positions and supportive services; and encourage IET programs that are informed by local industry sector partnerships.

Through reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act), create more explicit connections between career and technical education (CTE) programs and adult education. CTE programs, particularly at the postsecondary level, provide an important on ramp for individuals to improve their skills and obtain occupational credentials. However, Perkins does not require alignment of its career pathways with adult education supported under WIOA Title II. The Perkins state planning process should require consultation with the state agency or entity responsible for administration of adult education activities under WIOA Title II, and require a description of how locally developed career pathways will be coordinated with career pathways efforts carried out by a local workforce development board. In addition, outcome measures for Perkins postsecondary participants should align with WIOA common performance measures to the extent practicable.

Incentivize private investment in frontline workers with foundational skill needs. While the Upskilling Guarantee is a public commitment, employers can play a role in helping entry level workers upskill. The administration should work with Congress to restructure the \$1 billion Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) as the Work-Based Learning Opportunity Tax Credit. This program would reward companies that hire individuals with particular needs—including those who are exiting public benefits programs or have low basic skills—via a tax credit that partially offsets costs incurred by businesses. Eligible costs would be those incurred by companies that invest in on-site training or pay the tuition of such employees who are learning off site at a community college or other training institution, who are pursuing that training as part of an apprenticeship or other formalized work-based learning program.

First Term (2017-20)

Support new investments to help reach Upskilling Guarantee, increasing current federal investments in adult education from \$580 million to \$1.7 billion.

Significantly increase resources targeting individuals with low literacy and numeracy skills.

- *Increase WIOA Title II Funding each year such that by 2020, funding for the program will have doubled to \$1.2 billion.* WIOA funding has dropped substantially over the past decade, and the number of individuals served has fallen from more than 2 million to just 1.5 million. At least 25 percent of increased funds should focus on strengthening the adult education system's infrastructure, including professional development and teacher effectiveness training; curriculum development and dissemination; adoption and use of technological tools to support blended learning approaches and other proven practices; and high-quality pathway navigation and support services. Existing WIOA reporting requirements and performance measures would allow evaluation of the impact of increased investment, and gauge progress toward the Upskilling Guarantee.
- *Through comprehensive immigration reform, establish a new \$500 million Skills Equity Employment Fund for upskilling American workers.* Comprehensive immigration reform legislation will almost certainly include an increase in work visas issued to high-skilled immigrants through the H-1B visa program and similar avenues. A substantive increase in such visas will increase the amount of funding available for job training for current American workers. But millions of people won't be able to take advantage of these programs because they lack the basic skills required to enter occupational training. At least \$500 million in *new* high-skilled immigrant visa fees should be set aside annually to support integrated or contextualized adult basic education services that can help current U.S. workers with low foundational skills succeed in the labor market. This competitive grant program would be jointly administered by the DOL and ED.

5

INTEGRATING AMERICA'S IMMIGRANT WORKFORCE



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Instituto del Progreso
Latino, Chicago, Illinois

- > Immigrants represent more than one in seven American workers, but the absence of a national immigrant integration policy has prevented many from fully contributing to the economy. Comprehensive immigration reform, if passed, will provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. But simply providing individuals with a work permit doesn't guarantee full economic integration and participation. Any immigration policy must be accompanied by a forward thinking skills strategy that is inclusive of U.S. born workers as well as newcomers. We can't leave talent on the table, and that means making sure that every new American has a realistic chance to learn English, bolster their foundational skills, and pursue occupational training that will allow them to earn a family sustaining wage.

2020 GOAL: Six million immigrant youth and adults will have expanded access to English language and skill-building opportunities leading to improved employment outcomes. This will require work on three fronts. First, collaborating with Congress to ensure that comprehensive immigration reform includes investments in the skills of all immigrants and equips undocumented immigrants to start on the pathway to citizenship. Second, substantially increasing federal investment in skills—through immigration reform legislation and through adult education and workforce programs—that will benefit immigrants and native born Americans alike. Third, aligning federal adult education and workforce policies and programs to facilitate immigrant participation.

THE CHALLENGE: The U.S. is home to 42 million immigrants, but 11 million have been stymied in their efforts to become full participants in the American labor market and our wider society. Congress will likely take up comprehensive immigration reform as a critical first step in providing legal work authorization and a pathway to citizenship for these individuals. But we can't assume that simply providing individuals with a work permit will lead to full economic integration and participation.

The United States can and should benefit from the skills and abilities that immigrants already possess. And we need a robust plan to provide equal opportunity for both newly work-authorized people and longtime residents to build their skills and careers through our existing adult education and workforce development system, career and technical education (CTE) system, and higher education system.

First 100 Days

Establish White House Office of Citizenship and New Americans (OCNA) and appoint the Director to the newly established White House Skills Cabinet. Establishing this office will provide a vital coordinating point for the diverse activities, funding streams, and policy issues that affect immigrant populations. In recognition of the central role of adult education and workforce issues within the broader work of immigrant integration, the Director of OCNA should also be appointed to the newly established Skills Cabinet. OCNA should build on the work of the prior Task Force

on New Americans, and should be authorized to identify and address barriers facing immigrant workers and adult learners; develop and implement new policies; and convene stakeholders to obtain input on policy barriers and potential solutions. OCNA should be charged by the White House Skills Cabinet with issuing an annual report tracking improvements in immigrants' access to and outcomes from all federal investments in skills. The report should contain aggregated participant data detailing educational achievement, credential attainment, and employment and wage outcomes.

Strengthen immigrants' access to federal workforce services for which they are eligible. Issue policy guidance and provide technical assistance. Guidance from the Department of Labor (DOL) should affirm Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I eligibility for all individuals with work authorization and encourage workforce boards to review their job training policies to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to participation by eligible immigrants and adult English learners. Technical assistance from DOL should provide specific, concrete examples of successful partnerships between workforce boards/American Job Centers and immigrant serving organizations, as well as professional development on how to create such partnerships. Guidance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) should spell out opportunities for serving immigrants through Community Development Block Grant employment and training services.

Use guidance and regulatory authority to improve services to immigrant opportunity youth. Issue policy guidance outlining opportunities for states to address needs of opportunity youth ages 14-24 who are immigrants and English learners, including through the implementation of WIOA Title I Youth activities, WIOA Title II adult education services, and Perkins Act secondary and postsecondary programs. Regulations being promulgated under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) should similarly take into account the needs of these youth, and address disincentives for serving them.

Make better use of existing data to drive improvement. Charge OCNA with reviewing availability of federal data on immigrant adult learners and workers and identifying



Photo courtesy JVS Boston, Boston, Massachusetts

opportunities for analysis and learning. Existing datasets within the Census Bureau, Department of Education (ED), DOL, and Office of Refugee Resettlement hold substantial promise for helping to identify the skill sets and workforce potential among immigrant populations. Understanding existing data can also help to identify barriers or gaps that prevent immigrant learners and workers from advancing through federally funded programs or services.

First Year (2017-18)

Perkins Act reauthorization should help ensure access to career and technical education (CTE) for English language learners. Perkins does not currently require alignment of its career pathways with adult education services supported under Title II of WIOA. Given that approximately 650,000 of the individuals served under Title II are believed to be immigrants,⁴ this lack of coordination can have signif-

icant consequences for immigrant learners. Improvements to Perkins described in NSC’s Upskilling Guarantee platform will help alleviate these consequences.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reauthorization should incorporate factors that facilitate immigrant success. Approximately 3.6 million adult SNAP participants are immigrants. SNAP reauthorization should bolster the ability of all participants to access employment and training (SNAP E&T) services, and should invest in continuing technical assistance and pilots to help states build on the successful example of Washington State, which has partnered with immigrant serving organizations to deliver voluntary skills-based SNAP E&T to immigrants and English learners.

Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization should provide meaningful on ramps for immigrant learners via a new Career Pathways program. Fully 12 million of the 36 million working age U.S. adults with low basic skills are immigrants, many of whom would be eligible for HEA funded services. As described in NSC’s Upskilling Guarantee proposal, a Career Pathways grant program should incentivize the

⁴ Title II does not require reporting of data on participants’ place of birth, but it does record data on participants’ place of education. According to data from the National Reporting System, roughly 650,000 Title II participants in Program Year 2014-15 were educated outside the US.

development of Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs developed in collaboration between eligible institutions and community-based organizations, including WIOA Title II adult education providers and immigrant serving organizations; provide support for pathway navigator positions and supportive services; and encourage the development of IET programs informed by local industry sector partnerships.

Include immigrant populations as eligible target populations for federal discretionary education and training grants. There is evidence that the signaling effect of explicitly including immigrant populations among the list of eligible populations for federally funded projects can result in an eager response from practitioners. The administration should review forthcoming skills related initiatives from all agencies represented in the White House Skills Cabinet, and include immigrant learners and workers as appropriate.

First Term (2017-20)

Ensure that comprehensive immigration reform (or stand-alone immigrant integration legislation) includes a robust skills strategy. Comprehensive immigration reform would likely put a minimum of five million formerly undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship. Ensuring these individuals can successfully navigate required milestones on this pathway will require an intentional skills strategy. This should include:

- ***\$1 billion in new funding for adult Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) and Integrated Education and Training (IET) classes for those on a path to citizenship.*** Through a new grant program within comprehensive immigration reform or a stand-alone immigrant integration bill, establish a grant to support VESL/IET. Fund the program at \$1 billion over four years with unclaimed dollars from the Social Security Earnings Suspense File. Eligible institutions should include those with demonstrated effectiveness in VESL/IET or partnerships

comprised of organizations with expertise in serving immigrants and organizations with VESL/IET expertise. At least seven percent of funds should support evaluation. To the extent practicable, align outcome measures with WIOA core performance measures. At the same time, establish a Skills Equity Employment Fund for upskilling current American workers as outlined in NSC's Upskilling platform.

- ***Support partnerships that lead to better educational and employment outcomes for those on a path to citizenship.*** Establish a trust fund (through new fees/penalties on visa applicants) to support effective partnerships between immigrant serving organizations and the adult education and workforce system. Partnerships should draw on the expertise of each entity to provide high-quality, adult education and skills training in conjunction with supportive services. Eligible partners should include institutions of higher education, workforce boards, American Job Centers, nonprofit organizations, adult schools, labor unions, labor management partnerships, and libraries. Partnerships should demonstrate the capacity to provide services that effectively reach immigrant populations and equip them with the skills necessary to earn family sustaining wages.
- ***Create a middle-skill pathway to citizenship for Dreamers.*** The DREAM Act, first introduced 15 years ago, would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children. Whether DREAM is incorporated into comprehensive immigration reform or taken up as a separate bill, it should reflect the demands of our current labor market. DREAM's existing pathways to citizenship—obtaining a two- or four-year degree or completing military service—should be expanded to include industry-recognized middle-skill credentials. The proposed changes to CTE and higher education outlined above would help ensure Dreamer success in obtaining these credentials.

6

WELFARE TO CAREERS: A SKILLS-BASED APPROACH TO POVERTY REDUCTION



- > It has been said that the best anti-poverty program is a job. A better anti-poverty program is a good job, or even better, a career—specifically, a career that can support a family and provides opportunities for advancement. We should align and strengthen our nation’s public assistance programs to provide meaningful education and training opportunities, so that low-income individuals who are able to work can get and keep family supporting jobs.

2020 GOAL: Guarantee that anyone receiving federal public assistance can choose to participate in high-quality training to obtain an industry-recognized credential. Provide sufficient supports to enable those who are able to work to sustain employment over time. Use the upcoming reauthorizations of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to reorient our nation’s safety net from one focused on moving individuals off of public assistance as quickly as possible to one focused on providing real opportunities for our most economically disadvantaged citizens to access the education, training, and supports needed to find and keep family supporting careers.

THE CHALLENGE: For a generation, our nation’s welfare system under TANF has included strict requirements to drive “work eligible” recipients toward rapid labor market attachment. These requirements assumed that getting a job—any job—would lead to self-sufficiency. Some have proposed extending these requirements to a broader range of public assistance programs.

TANF’s twenty-year-old “work first” approach hasn’t reduced poverty. It’s even less likely to achieve this goal in today’s labor market. Employers across the country and in every industry struggle to find individuals with the credentials for middle-skill jobs. But over 90 percent of TANF recipients have no postsecondary education, and one-third lack a high school diploma. Seventy percent of long-term SNAP recipients have no education beyond high school and half have less than a high school education. Many public assistance recipients face additional barriers to employment, such as insecure housing, lack of transportation and child care, or physical or mental disabilities, that a work first approach cannot address.

We need a new approach to poverty reduction. We need to protect those who are unable to work, help work ready individuals obtain credentials for middle-skill jobs that can support a family, and expand supportive services to overcome obstacles to moving up the skills ladder. This approach would help reduce poverty while creating a vast new pool of skilled talent to help U.S. businesses grow. What’s more, a skills-based approach works. Rigorous evaluations of

welfare programs in California, Missouri, and North Carolina found that individuals in education and training programs had better labor market outcomes than those in programs focused on job search and immediate employment. Congress and the next administration should abandon the outdated, twenty-year-old focus on process and benefit status as a measure of success. Instead, we should focus on outcomes that actually achieve the goal of poverty reduction for those who are able to work—employment, wages, and wage advancement.

First 100 Days

Create a Welfare to Careers working group within the newly created White House Skills Cabinet and charge it with identifying barriers to participation in education and training for public benefit recipients. The working group should be charged with identifying current statutory and regulatory barriers to participation in education and training—such as the time limits for vocational educational training under TANF—and developing recommendations for removing such barriers. The working group should also analyze federal and state income eligibility requirements that may contribute to the “cliff effect,” where individuals lose access to benefits upon reaching certain earning levels, and provide recommendations for increased investments in supports that can sustain individuals while they climb a career ladder. The working group should also analyze connections between workforce programs, criminal justice and public housing systems, and develop a set of recommendations for ensuring that vulnerable populations are better served.

Encourage states to adopt voluntary skills-based SNAP E&T programs. Instruct the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to issue guidance to states encouraging them to shift to all-voluntary skills-based SNAP employment and training (E&T) programs, and explicitly discouraging mandatory programs which link participation to benefit eligibility. Evidence has shown that voluntary programs yield better long-term outcomes for participants, while mandatory programs are often geared toward non-productive “make work” activities that don’t align with labor market needs.



Ensure public assistance participants are effectively served under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Issue cross-agency guidance encouraging states and local areas to ensure that individuals in public assistance programs are receiving priority of service through the federally supported workforce system as required under WIOA, and identifying best practices and strategies for engaging public assistance recipients in high-quality training. Issue guidance on how states can support alignment of TANF and SNAP with other workforce investments through the WIOA unified or combined plan process.

First Year (2017-18)

Work with Congress to reform TANF to support access to skills and credentials. Ensure a new vision for TANF that includes these key elements:

- **Measure what matters.** Allow states to choose between current work participation rate requirements or an outcomes-based performance system based on WIOA common indicators. These indicators would track how well states are helping recipients meet employment,

earnings, and credential attainment goals. Allow states to negotiate performance rates that accurately reflect employment barriers facing TANF recipients.

- **Eliminate current restrictions on education and training.** These restrictions include the limit on the percentage of individuals in training who may count towards state work participation rates. Expand the types of activities that can be supported through TANF funds, including integrated education and training and pre-apprenticeship programs.
- **Support proven strategies.** Provide new, dedicated funding to support proven strategies for helping low-skilled individuals succeed in training that allows them to fill jobs that are in demand locally. These strategies include sector partnerships, career pathways, and work-based learning models.
- **Increase overall funding for TANF state grants.** Grants are 30 percent below 1996 levels when adjusted for inflation. In addition, set minimum state expenditure requirements for core program activities for TANF recipients,

including cash assistance, child care, and work related activities.

Work with Congress to reauthorize SNAP to support access to skills and credentials. Ensure a new vision for SNAP that includes these key elements:

- **Remove the 3-month time limit on Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs).** Current law places strict limits on SNAP eligibility for ABAWDs. This restrictive policy limits states' ability to provide meaningful, high quality job training to this population.
- **Establish state performance requirements that measure how well states are connecting work-ready SNAP recipients to high-quality training opportunities.** This includes not only SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T), but also how well states are connecting participants to programs funded under WIOA, the Higher Education Act (HEA), and other federal investments. Require states to report on employment, earnings, and credential attainment outcomes for individuals transitioning off of SNAP. Require states that fail to meet performance requirements to develop performance improvement plans to better connect individuals to skills and jobs.
- **Ensure the workforce system effectively serves SNAP recipients.** Encourage states to include services for SNAP recipients as part of their state plans under WIOA, including descriptions of how SNAP recipients will be connected to sector partnerships and career pathways within the state.
- **Target higher barrier populations for skills investments.** Invest in new pilot grants under SNAP E&T that target services to specific subpopulations for whom key barriers must be addressed in order to improve employment

outcomes, such as individuals with a history of incarceration, individuals with limited English proficiency, and those without a high school diploma or equivalent.

- **Expand technical assistance to states.** Reauthorize and expand the SNAP to Skills Center of Excellence, which provides technical assistance to states seeking to expand or improve their SNAP E&T programs.

First Term (2017-20)

Establish a national commitment to increase the percentage of public assistance recipients who receive high-quality training services and related supports leading to industry- recognized credentials and family supporting jobs each year.

- **Measure progress.** As part of the Welfare to Careers working group's annual report to the White House Skills Cabinet, measure the number of individuals transitioning off of public assistance and into careers. Measure success not based on the number of hours worked or the reduction in the number of individuals receiving benefits, but rather on the successful provision of meaningful opportunities to build skills and obtain good-paying jobs in the short and long run.
- **Invest in this national commitment.** Develop an anti-poverty budget proposal that provides dedicated funding under TANF, SNAP, and other federal programs to support the expansion of workforce services, including funding to support the development and implementation of key cross program strategies like sector partnerships and career pathways, and work supports that enable individuals to transition into stable and sustainable employment over time.

7

BUILDING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO REBUILD OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE



Photo courtesy of Boston
Private Industry Council,
Boston, Massachusetts

- > As we invest in the country's roads, bridges, rail and public transit; expand affordable broadband; advance energy infrastructure; and improve dams and levees, we must simultaneously invest in the skilled workforce necessary to build this vital infrastructure. Each billion dollars spent on infrastructure produces between 13,000 and 27,800 jobs. But if we want this job creation to pay off for American families and the economy as a whole, we must build a diverse pipeline of workers with the skills to access these in-demand opportunities.

2020 GOAL: A diverse set of three million new and existing workers will be trained for middle-skill infrastructure jobs. More states will access available workforce development funding under existing or new infrastructure legislation. Improved accountability measures will ensure that infrastructure investments lead to skill development opportunities and jobs for a diverse pool of workers.

THE CHALLENGE: Our nation's transportation systems and other physical infrastructure are in need of an upgrade. The Society of Civil Engineers most recently graded the U.S. infrastructure at a D+, based on the system's capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, resilience and innovation.⁵

Relatively low levels of unemployment in the construction and manufacturing industries—comprising nearly 73 percent of all transportation infrastructure jobs—suggest that demand is outpacing supply of trained infrastructure workers.⁶ Unemployment rates for construction workers have declined to 5.9 percent in 2016 from a high of 26.5 percent in 2010, and for manufacturing workers to 5.5 percent in 2016 from a 2010 high of 16.1 percent.⁷ Even as the labor market tightens, fewer young people are accessing transportation infrastructure jobs. The transportation workforce is older than the workforce in many other fields—impending retirements of nearly 50 percent of the workforce in the next ten years will compound demand for new workers.⁸ Inequities in the sector also exacerbate the difficulty in recruiting enough workers. Women and people of color are underrepresented in the manufacturing and construction sectors. These populations have limited access to training that would prepare them for good infrastructure jobs. This

means employers have access to fewer qualified workers to fill vacancies.

Strategies like pre-apprenticeship, career pathways, integrated education and training, and sector partnerships can expand and diversify the pipeline of skilled workers, but investments in training capacity are needed to meet the needs of the infrastructure industry and workforce.

First 100 Days

Develop an Infrastructure working group within the newly formed White House Skills Cabinet. The working group should be comprised of the Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Education (ED), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Defense (DOD), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Department of the Interior (DOI). The Subcommittee should be charged with assessing policy barriers and opportunities to expand job training, particularly work-based learning and apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship strategies, to prepare a diverse pipeline of workers for infrastructure jobs.

Encourage effective state use of On-the-Job Training Supportive Services (OJT/SS) program funds. Instruct DOT to reissue guidance to states on accessing federal funds available under 23 U.S.C. 140(b) for workforce training and publicize this guidance to encourage all 50 states to access the formula funding. Annually, about \$6 million is used to fund the OJT/SS Program, intended to support state highway agencies' training programs and increase opportunities for women, minorities and disadvantaged individuals. Require DOT to track all trainee participants in OJT/SS or other training programs run by DOT. States and contractors should be required to enter demographic, employment, wage and certification attainment information into a federal database to facilitate better tracking and targeting of future investments.

Encourage effective state use of surface transportation training funds. Under 23 U.S.C. 504(e), states can draw down funds from the five core surface transportation programs to support 100 percent federal funding of education,

5 <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/executive-summary/>

6 The Department of the Treasury with the Council of Economic Advisors, *Economic Analysis of Infrastructure Investment*, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/economic-policy/Documents/infrastructure_investment_report.pdf (2010)

7 http://www.mwrtba.org/cutcworkforce/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/NTWS_Summary_of_Results1.pdf

8 National Transportation Workforce Summit Summary of Results Framework for Action (2012) http://www.mwrtba.org/cutcworkforce/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/NTWS_Summary_of_Results1.pdf



Photo courtesy of Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board, Inc., New Bern, North Carolina

training or workforce development programs (including programs for women and minorities) to expand the surface transportation workforce. While a number of states legislate the usage of 504(e) funds, including Maryland and Oregon,⁹ the funds are still drastically underutilized. Instruct DOT to collect data on states' usage of 23 U.S.C. 504(e) funds to have a benchmark by which to gauge increased usage. Data collection should include tracking of the state usage, the amount used toward workforce development, the target populations of the training, lists of partners involved in training, and baseline and yearly review of the impacts of the usage of funds.

First Year (2017-18)

Ensure reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) can support industry-driven training needed to fill infrastructure jobs.

Only one-third of all Perkins funding, the primary federal source for career and technical education (CTE) programs,

goes to support community and technical programs, and in many states that level of support is even lower. Because it is often seen as a program focused on secondary education—and a program not tied to employment outcomes for participants—many Perkins-funded programs do not partner with local businesses or sector partnerships to ensure programming is targeted to training needs for upcoming or existing job openings. The administration should work with Congress to include provisions to fund partnerships between community colleges, employers, and community-based organizations, including partnerships formed to train the next generation of workers for infrastructure investments.

Encourage alignment of transportation training funds with other federal skills investments.

Instruct DOL, ED, and DOT to issue joint guidance on aligning DOT funds, WIOA formula funding, and federal investments in apprenticeship to support the development and implementation of infrastructure training programs, including through the development of sector partnerships and career pathways models in related industries. Guidance should include best practices on recruiting, counseling, training, and support services for underrepresented populations to ensure that the fullest possible range of workers is connected to emerging job opportunities.

⁹ Maryland Legislature Chapter 664 (House Bill 457) Transportation—Highway or Capital Transit Construction Training and Supportive Services, effective date July 2012 http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2012RS/chapters_noln/Ch_664_hb0457e.pdf; Oregon §184.866 Highway Construction Workforce Development <http://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/184.866>.

Support access to transportation training for public benefit recipients. Instruct the Department of Transportation to issue joint guidance with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Agriculture (USDA), HUD and ED on strategies to connect recipients of public assistance to training opportunities for the infrastructure workforce. Ensure that such guidance emphasizes access to career pathways models that provide basic skills and occupational training, as well as support services to sustain engagement before and after job entry

Support the creation or expansion of transportation sector partnerships in at least 10 states. Build on the work of the National Network for the Transportation Workforce and Regional Surface Transportation Workforce Centers (RSTWCs), housed at the Federal Highway Administration, to establish transportation sector partnerships in at least 10 states, corresponding to upcoming megaprojects. Under WIOA, each local area is required to identify in-demand industries and to support sector partnerships targeting these industries. DOL and ED should work with DOT to integrate RSTWCs and local boards' efforts to build sector partnerships in areas with upcoming megaprojects and in areas in which infrastructure investment will necessitate a trained workforce.

Expand DOE's Weatherization Training and Technical Assistance Program. Expand the program to include partnerships—and contributed funding—from DOT, DOL and ED to deliver joint technical assistance to infrastructure employers/contractors and state agencies. This partnership and funding should be used to improve training curricula and tools to support work quality, and to increase accreditation attainment in fields relevant to upcoming infrastructure investment. Technical assistance should facilitate state agency strategic planning and self-evaluation of upcoming workforce needs and necessary training and upskilling associated with meeting those needs. DOE should also work, through their engagement on the Infrastructure working group of the Skills Cabinet, to partner with other agencies to expand the program to different industries.

First Term (2017-20)

Ensure infrastructure investments include targeted training resources. Work with Congress and DOT to ensure that any legislation investing in infrastructure includes targeted resources to support training within impacted industries, including pathways to expand opportunities to low- and moderate-income individuals. To meet this goal, DOT and DOL should work with states and local areas to ensure all projects that receive federal, state, or local funding set targeted goals for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for underrepresented populations, and establish minimum expenditure requirements for training and support services. States and local areas should track training expenditures, employment and wage outcomes, and diversity outcomes to measure baseline and longer-term impact of these policies and to meet the goal of three million new trained workers. These investments should be made in partnership with DOL and ED to ensure strategies such as integrated education and training and career pathways provide greater equity in access to training, particularly for low-skill and low-income workers.

Work with Congress to implement the proposed Work-Based Learning Support Fund, and to ensure that business partners, local areas, apprentices and intermediaries engage with transportation, energy and other stakeholders to support the infrastructure workforce necessary to meet demand. The Work-Based Learning Support Fund (see Apprenticeship Proposal) is a proposed funding stream to support the diversification of the apprenticeship pipeline, while at the same time incorporating employer feedback about the critical first 6-12 months of an apprentice's employment. The fund would bring together a range of services to ensure that the apprentice is fully work ready, that they are receiving the proper training to succeed on the job during their first months of employment, and that risks taken by the new employer are minimized in order to make it easier for businesses—particularly smaller firms—to give new workers access to middle-skill jobs. The fund should be based out of the Office of Apprenticeship, HHS, or managed jointly and should be funded at \$100 million annually from congressional appropriations.

8

SMART DATA FOR A 21ST CENTURY SKILLED WORKFORCE



Photo courtesy of
Philadelphia Youth
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- > For many Americans, education is one of the biggest investments of time and money they will ever make. Car consumers can find out how well different makes and models perform and comparison shop to get a good value. Data is available to help make that decision. But students and workers trying to upgrade their skills don't have information to comparison shop between schools and programs. Similarly, federal and state leaders don't have information to make sure that tax dollars are supporting programs that actually help people get good jobs and grow our economy. We can take action to make sure people—from students to governors to small business owners—have the information they need to prosper in a 21st century economy.

2020 GOAL: All states and the federal government will have data systems in place to measure how well education and training programs are preparing skilled workers for the 21st century economy. The systems will link data to provide reliable and comparable employment outcomes for all post-secondary students and workforce programs. In addition to capturing a wider array of students and jobseekers, the data systems will include information on all credentials—certificates, licenses, and certifications—not just degrees. States and federal agencies will use this comprehensive information to guide human capital policy, and make key data available to help students and workers select education and career paths that lead to good jobs.

THE CHALLENGE: It is more important than ever to have good information about education, workers, and the economy. We don't just need more data. We need *smarter* data that:

- aligns across programs, including different federal funding streams;
- includes all pathways for building knowledge and skills;
- demonstrates if education and training programs teach skills relevant to employer needs; and
- monitors whether programs and policies offer equitable access to opportunity for individuals with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

Smart data is necessary to help a range of stakeholders. Students and workers need to know which colleges and training programs are best at helping people land a job, continue their studies, or advance in their careers. Policymakers need to know whether education and workforce programs are preparing people for good jobs. Business leaders need to know which education and training programs are likely to be the most effective at preparing qualified employees. And educators at schools, training programs, and community organizations want to know the long-term outcomes of their graduates so they can continually improve services.

Unfortunately, workforce and education data systems in the U.S.—while better than a decade ago—are still inadequate to meet these stakeholders' needs. In addition to smarter

data systems that protect privacy and sensitive information, our nation needs public support to help people get smart *about* data. Expanded federal and state capacity is necessary to analyze information and present it effectively to multiple audiences, and professional development on data use is imperative for educators and workforce development practitioners. The next president needs to confront these challenges head on by bringing our data policies into the 21st century.

First 100 Days

Publically charge the Secretary of Labor with developing a coordinated plan for continuous improvement of labor market information in coordination with federal agencies in the newly created White House Skills Cabinet. This should be done in consultation with relevant federal agencies in the White House Skills Cabinet as well as the Workforce Information Advisory Council established by WIOA. The plan, required by WIOA, should include improvements to administrative data, surveys, and data about occupations and skills. Updated labor market information is urgently needed in several areas, including data on the “gig economy” and employer-provided training.

Pledge to regularly update and improve the federal College Scorecard. This should include information on graduates' earnings so students and families can make good choices about postsecondary education. The College Scorecard should be improved to include higher education institutions and training providers that primarily grant certificates (not just degrees), and show outcomes for specific programs (not just institutions).

Identify and implement high-priority data sharing agreements. Put in place key interagency data agreements, such as use of employment data from the Social Security Administration (SSA) or Census to populate post-program earnings data in the College Scorecard.

Meet with the congressionally-mandated Commission on Evidence-Based Policy. Administrative leaders should express support for their mission of making better use of federal data, and advise the Commission to prioritize education and workforce issues, and address them in their final report (due August 2017).

Enforce new WIOA reporting requirements to advance effective services while also promoting state data infrastructure that enhances understanding of education, career paths. State data systems should not only satisfy federal mandates. They should provide useful information to help human capital programs improve services, and ensure equitable access to effective services for people with different backgrounds and skill levels. As part of this effort, enhance interagency federal guidance and technical assistance to help states link data while complying with federal privacy rules, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and Unemployment Insurance (UI) confidentiality regulations.

First Year (2017-18)

Redesign the current Department of Labor Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and Department of Education (ED) State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant programs. In the FY19 budget request for future funding, redesign WDQI and SLDS grant programs into a single, \$100 million interagency funding program for state data infrastructure. This funding would support states in providing valuable information about human capital development tailored to an individual state's policy priorities and needs. This should include:

- *\$50 million in formula funding to support comprehensive, aligned data systems that can be used to hold programs accountable and improve effectiveness of education and workforce services.* In addition to funding system development and maintenance, grants should support state personnel to analyze the data and train stakeholders on its use to inform policy and practice. Formula funding should have eligibility requirements, including the use of data for skills gap analysis, public scorecards, policymaker dashboards, and state matching funds. Funding could also be contingent on states enacting key data policies, such as enhanced UI wage records.
- *\$50 million in competitive grants for innovative projects that result in actionable information.* Grants could fund activities such as testing new processes for credential

validation that combine high-quality data on labor market value and direct input from employers. Funds could also be used for maximizing utility of existing data through partnerships with researchers, employers, and social service providers.

- *Award funding through an interagency team.* Under the direction of the newly created White House Skills Cabinet, the team should represent the Departments of Labor (DOL), ED, and Health and Human Services (HHS), in collaboration with other relevant agencies that oversee human capital programs. The \$41 million currently allocated to SLDS and WDQI grants would be redirected to this effort.

With existing WDQI funding, prioritize grant applicants that meet certain conditions, such as using data for skills gap analysis, public scorecards, and policymaker dashboards. Grants should give bonus points to states with policies that significantly improve data infrastructure, such as including private colleges and training providers on public scorecards, or mandating that employers report additional data in UI wage records, such as occupation and hours worked, to better measure training related employment outcomes.

Promote aligned and improved data reporting in Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act) and Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorizations.

The administration should work with Congress to align metrics and reporting requirements as appropriate between the Perkins Act, HEA, and WIOA. In particular, all of these laws should require similar reporting on employment outcomes for program completers. To facilitate reliable reporting on employment and credential attainment, HEA should establish a federal student record system and metrics like those called for in the proposed Student Right to Know Before You Go Act. This bipartisan bill calls for the reporting of valuable information, including the outcomes for Pell recipients and other vulnerable subpopulations. Finally, reauthorization proposals should include language encouraging the use of labor market information for program planning.

Support innovative data sharing pilots at federal agencies. Such pilots could include Census Bureau efforts to

form partnerships with states and with the National Student Clearinghouse to improve data about degrees, certificates, and industry-awarded credentials. Craft budget proposals that could bring successful pilots to scale.

Take administrative action to support evidence-based policy. Pursue administrative actions to enact recommendations of the Commission on Evidence-Based policy that would improve data about education and workforce programs.

Renegotiate data exchange agreements. Renegotiate Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), WRIS2, and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) data exchange agreements so that states can use employment data for broader purposes, including research and evaluation.

First Term (2017-20)

Create a centralized clearinghouse that facilitates data sharing between federal agencies for performance management, program integrity, and research/evaluation. Federal agencies have a wealth of information that could be combined in powerful ways to assess and improve publicly funded services. In particular, employment data is critical to measure the outcomes of many education, training, and social service programs. Data also could be shared with states for incorporation into their longitudinal data systems. The administration should propose a legal framework that uses the clearinghouse to streamline agency functions

and data sets. The proposal should consider multiple federal employment data sets, including the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), HHS's National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), and tax data at the SSA and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Rationalizing the federal data landscape likely would require significant changes to multiple laws, but it could cut costs and reduce security risks by addressing redundant data sets scattered across government.

Publicize reliable, nationwide, comparable data on core outcomes for a full array of postsecondary education and training options. In order to provide all citizens with opportunity and build a skilled workforce to fill in-demand jobs, our nation must embrace a culture of lifelong learning. There are many education and career pathways that lead to success, and the federal government should provide information on the full spectrum of postsecondary options. The administration should develop mechanisms to calculate and share metrics—including employment outcomes—for degrees, certificates, and industry certifications. This process will require working with Congress to change laws, such as enacting language in the proposed Student Right to Know Before You Go Act to overturn the HEA ban on a federal student record system. It also requires aligning efforts by multiple federal agencies, such as ED's College Scorecard and DOL's administration of WIOA performance reporting.



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