



## Federal Funding

Today more than ever, federal policy must support investments in the skills of the American workforce. Unemployment remains alarmingly high at 9 percent (nearly 14 million workers). More than 40 percent of the unemployed have been so for more than 6 months.

The publicly funded workforce development system has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years as demand for education and training skyrocketed during the recession. Nearly 34 million people were served by federal workforce programs—Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and Employment Services (ES)—in 2009, a 150 percent increase from 2007.

Funding for education and training decreased by almost 40 percent from 2009 to 2010. This is on top of long-term disinvestments, as annual funding for key Department of Labor programs declined by more than \$2 billion between Fiscal Years 2002 and 2009. Yet the need for an adequately funded workforce development system has never been more urgent.

Industry's ability to grow and compete is directly linked to the skills of its employees. Despite near record high unemployment rates, it has become increasingly difficult to find workers with the skills and credentials necessary to fill even current job openings and ever harder to plan for future growth due to uncertainty about the available skilled workforce.

National Skills Coalition is keenly aware of the deep constraints and difficult choices facing Congress in today's fiscal climate, but reducing our nation's investments in workforce development, basic skills and postsecondary education will have an immediate impact on business' ability to find qualified workers, and will do lasting damage to our nation's position as a global leader in the 21st-century economy. With the economy finally showing signs of recovery, and businesses increasingly looking to hire new workers to take advantage of emerging opportunities, it is more critical than ever to support key investments in the workforce development strategies that will help ensure America is ready to get back to work.

### **National Skills Coalition**

seeks an America that grows its economy by investing in its people, so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.

We organize broad-based coalitions seeking to raise the skills of America's workers across a range of industries. We advocate for public policies that invest in what works, as informed by our members' real-world expertise. We communicate these goals to an American public seeking a vision for a strong U.S. economy that allows everyone to be part of its success.

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