



March 21, 2020

Speaker Pelosi
U.S. Capitol Building, Room H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Majority Leader McConnell
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-230
Washington, DC 20510

Senate Minority Leader Schumer
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-221
Washington, DC 20510

House Minority Leader McCarthy
U.S. Capitol Building, Room H-204
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The financial, emotional and physical toll that this health pandemic has put on our country cannot be overstated and the economic effects associated with the crisis will have long-term impact on our country. Workers face unprecedented levels of job loss, businesses are concerned for the health of their workforce and the competitiveness of their companies, and communities are desperate for resources to address both these and other challenges.

The Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce (CIAW)— a diverse coalition of national organizations that offer direct services, advocacy, research, and policy development to help people of all ages and conditions succeed in today's economy—writes to express our appreciation for your leadership during this difficult time.

As you continue to work to address the spread of COVID-19 and ease its economic impacts, CIAW strongly encourages Congress to provide vitally needed funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in any further federal stimulus packages. There is no question that the demand for reemployment, skilling and reskilling services will increase substantially during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. WIOA funding enables our publicly funded workforce and postsecondary education systems to prepare workers both for in-demand jobs required today, including those in the healthcare industry, and to fill jobs that will lead to economic growth once we have moved past this current crisis.

In the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA), Congress recognized the importance of increased funding for our workforce system to respond to an economic crisis. ARRA investments nearly doubled federal funding for the workforce system that year, providing states and local areas with vital resources to rapidly respond to worker needs and business demands.



Funding for the workforce system today is even more vital than it was a decade ago given the global impact of the pandemic and lowered levels of economic security across our country. Currently, however, WIOA funding levels are 25 percent lower than in 2009 and the United States invests in active labor market policies at levels lower than every other industrialized country, except for Mexico. In order to reach even the median level of investment, we'd need to invest an extra \$80 billion annually. The U.S. response to this crisis should follow historic precedent for investment and move us towards parity with our global peers to ensure the best outcomes for workers, businesses and communities across the country.

CIAW urges Congress to invest in our greatest asset – our people:

Increase investments in WIOA Title I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker and Title III formula funding at least to the levels provided under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, factoring in inflation, \$4.5 billion. During that economic downturn, the workforce system experienced a 234 percent increase in the number of Americans seeking reemployment and training services and the system served more than 8 million people in 2009. The public workforce system is poised to address challenges faced by workers who are dislocated as a result of COVID-19 and its economic impact and by workers who need rapid retraining to enter in-demand jobs, like those in healthcare, logistics and manufacturing. To do so, states and local areas need Congress to make adequate investments in this system, empowering it to: best serve its customers – workers and businesses – helping workers to get back to work, including the more than 4.5 million young adults 16-24 who are not at work or in school; helping employers find the skilled workers they need to remain competitive; and helping community colleges and training providers re-open physical classrooms.

Increase investments in WIOA National grant funding at least to levels under ARRA, \$1.25 billion. In addition to allocating funding to states to support workforce activities, Congress should invest in WIOA's national grant programs – including the National Emergency Grants and Dislocated Worker National Reserve Fund – that are targeted directly to communities and areas most impacted by COVID-19 and its economic impacts. This funding will be critical to regional, state and local response to an evolving crisis.

Increase investments in WIOA Title II Adult Basic Education funding with an additional \$1 billion in education and training for workers who will need literacy, numeracy and digital skills to succeed in the workforce. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the speed at which many adult education programs can shift to online and blended formats. WIOA Title II funding is critical to states' ability to serve the more than 36 million U.S. workers who have basic skills needs, as well as the 48 million who lack digital literacy skills. Preparing workers with these skills today – and ensuring support for this training over the next program year – will be critical to addressing worker shortage in in-demand industries.

Please contact Katie Spiker, Director of Government Affairs at National Skills Coalition, at Katies@nationalskillscoalition.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Advance CTE
American Association of Community Colleges
AnitaB.org
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
Heartland Alliance
Jobs for the Future
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
National Coalition for Literacy
National Council for Workforce Education
National League of Cities
National Skills Coalition
National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues
National Youth Employment Coalition
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
ProLiteracy
RespectAbility
The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
The Corps Network
United Way Worldwide
World Education
YouthBuild USA