



May 28, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chair, Labor-HHS Subcommittee  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Labor-HHS Subcommittee  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

As you develop the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 funding bill, the Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce (CIAW) urges you to include adequate investments in workforce and education to meet the needs of both workers and businesses. CIAW is a diverse coalition of national organizations that offer direct services, advocacy, research, and policy development to help people of all ages and conditions develop their skills, enter gainful employment, and enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.

CIAW appreciates your commitment to protecting funding levels for many workforce and education programs in FY2019. Investments in our workforce and education systems are still below authorized and historic levels, however, and CIAW urges you to provide urgently needed increases in FY 2020 without reducing investments in other workforce and education programs.

Today, businesses in nearly every state struggle to find workers with necessary skills. Fifty three percent of jobs are middle skill, but only 43 percent of workers are trained at that level and labor force participation for young people and adults remain at historic lows. A primary goal of our nation's workforce development and technical education systems is helping workers develop the skills necessary to fill job openings today and the jobs of the 21st century, as outlined in the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Investments in skills training are overwhelmingly popular with workers and businesses across the country, but Congress has not invested in the programs at adequate levels in recent years. Nearly 80% of small and mid-sized business owners support new, public investment in skill, as do 93% of likely 2020 voters. However, since 2001 WIOA funding has been cut by 40 percent, Career and Technical Education funding by 32 percent and Adult Basic Education funding by almost 20 percent. In the past year alone, even with level-funding, programs serving adults in 22 states saw a more than five percent cut in their funding levels, those serving youth saw a decrease in funding in 27 states, and those serving dislocated workers saw a cut in funding in 34 states.



These cuts mean fewer businesses are served and fewer workers earn the skills they need to enter good jobs. If Congress had funded WIOA at FY2018 authorized levels in FY2018, programs could have trained 150,000 more workers in 2018 alone. By comparison, if Congress had funded WIOA at 2001 levels in FY2018, programs could have trained 540,000 more workers in 2018.

Programs funded under WIOA and other workforce and education programs produce strong workforce outcomes for participants, including those who need services the most. Nearly three quarters of all WIOA participants have no post-secondary education and training and 43 percent are low-income. After receiving training under WIOA, workers access jobs in industries desperate for workers including health care, manufacturing, transportation and construction – jobs of the 21st century.

CIAW urges you to make the following investments to prepare workers for jobs in the future as well as those U.S. businesses are trying desperately to fill today.

- If we invested WIOA Title I employment and training programs at FY2001 levels, Congress would fund these programs at \$4,680,000,000. Congress should invest at least at authorized levels of \$3,299,961,000 so that states, local areas, and other partners can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA;
- If we invested in adult education and literacy programs at FY 2001 levels, Congress would fund these programs at \$779,000,000. Congress should invest in Title II of WIOA at least at authorized levels of \$698,640,000 to ensure that the 36 million Americans with low basic skills can take advantage of existing and emerging economic opportunities;
- If we invested in Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA at FY 2001 levels, Congress would fund this program at \$1,109,938,639. Congress should at least restore funding to FY 2017 levels of \$671,413,000 to give states the additional resources they need to provide WIOA's intensive reemployment services;
- If we invested in the vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities at FY 2001 levels, Congress would fund the programs at \$3,748,953. Congress should invest in Title IV at least at current year authorized levels of \$3.5 billion;
- Congress should fund Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants at \$10 million to help states meet the performance requirements under WIOA, lift up effective practices and enable employers to meet their workforce needs;
- Congress should fund job training and employment services for older workers (Senior Community Service Employment Program) at least at the authorized level of \$463,809,605 to ensure older adults with significant barriers to employment can access work-based community service training and maintain the proposed funding increase for employment services for at-risk veterans (Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program);



- Congress should make a strong investment in the Corporation for National and Community Service's programs like AmeriCorps;
- Congress should increase investment in apprenticeship programs to \$200 million to expand access to programs for a diverse pipeline of workers and businesses, including small- and medium-sized businesses and those in emerging industries;
- If we invested in CTE state grants under the Carl D. Perkins Act at 2001 levels, we would invest \$1.76 billion in FY 2020. Congress should make a strong down payment on CTE programs today to reduce high school drop-out rates, equip students with workforce-relevant skills and expand a talent pool that is responsive to the needs of employers.
- Congress should increase the Pell Grant maximum award and protect the future fiscal stability of the program to enable its continuation as an essential resource for students in workforce-oriented programs.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We can't compete if we cut. If you have questions about this letter, please contact Katie Spiker at [Katies@nationalskillscoalition.org](mailto:Katies@nationalskillscoalition.org).

Sincerely,

Advance CTE  
American Association of Community Colleges  
AnitaB.org  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Association of Community College Trustees  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation  
CLASP - Center for Law and Social Policy  
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce  
Easterseals  
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.  
Heartland Alliance  
Jobs for the Future (JFF)  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Development Organizations  
National Association of Regional Councils  
National Association of Workforce Boards  
National Association of Workforce Development Professionals



National Council on Aging  
National Council for Workforce Education  
National Fund for Workforce Solutions  
National League of Cities  
National Skills Coalition  
National Youth Employment Coalition  
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies  
ProLiteracy  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
The Corps Network  
United States Workforce Association  
United Way Worldwide  
Workforce Data Quality Campaign