



June 7, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
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) 2019 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 businesses and workers. 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.

Our coalition applauds the subcommittee's efforts to increase funding for many workforce and education programs in FY 2018 and to advocate for a better subcommittee allocation to increase funding for workforce and education programs without lowering support for other vital programs. 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 2019.

Today, businesses in nearly every state are struggling to find workers with necessary skills. Middle skill jobs—those requiring more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree—make up 53 percent of today's labor market, but only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at this level. At the same time, there are millions more low-skill workers than low-skill jobs. With unemployment at just over four percent, and labor-force participation for young people and adults at historic lows, this means filling vacant middle-skill jobs will require training and upskilling workers across the country.

Providing this training and the economic opportunity that comes with it is a primary goal of the nation's workforce development system, but current funding levels make it impossible for programs to meet the vision outlined in the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Proposed reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act will face the same challenges. 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.



WIOA programs successfully serve workers who need training to access vacant middle-skill jobs. 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 are able to access jobs in industries desperate for workers including health care, manufacturing, transportation and construction.

We simply cannot meet the goals of U.S. business or workers and compete in a global economy if we continue cutting and eliminating effective workforce and education programs. 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:

- Funding WIOA Title I employment and training programs at least at authorized levels of \$3,293,978,000 so that states, local areas, and other partners can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA;
- Funding adult education and literacy programs under Title II of WIOA at least at authorized levels of \$664,552,000 to ensure that the 36 million Americans with low basic skills can take advantage of existing and emerging economic opportunities;
- Restoring funding for Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA to FY 2017 levels of \$671,413,000 to give states the additional resources they need to provide WIOA's intensive reemployment services;
- Funding the vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities at current year levels;
- Funding Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants at \$10 million to help states meet the performance requirements under WIOA, demonstrate how strategies like sector partnerships and career pathways help participants obtain employment and enable employers to meet their skilled workforce needs and to improve evidence-based policymaking and evaluation;
- Funding job training and employment services for older workers (Senior Community Service Employment Program) at the authorized level of \$463,809,605 to ensure older adults with significant barriers to employment can access work-based community service training in their communities and maintain the proposed funding increase for employment services for at-risk veterans (Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program);
- Strong levels of funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service's programs like AmeriCorps;
- Maintaining or increasing the \$145 million investment in apprenticeship programs in current-year funding to expand access to programs for a diverse pipeline of workers and businesses, including small- and medium-sized businesses and those in emerging industries;



- Funding strong investments in CTE state grants under the Carl D. Perkins Act to support programs that 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.
- 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.

Sincerely,

American Association of Community Colleges
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Center for Adult and Experiential Learning
Center for Law and Social Policy
Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
Corps Network
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
Easterseals
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Heartland Alliance
Jobs for the Future
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of State Workforce Agencies
National Association of Workforce Boards
National Association of Workforce Professionals
National Coalition for Literacy
National Council of State Directors of Adult Education
National Fund for Workforce Solutions



National League of Cities
National Skills Coalition
National Youth Employment Coalition
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
The National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE)
United States Workforce Association
United Way Worldwide
Workforce Data Quality Campaign
YouthBuild USA
Young Invincibles