

CREATING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

Investing in the American workforce is critical to expanding our nation's economic success and ensuring that all people have opportunities to thrive. The priorities: “re-skilling” those who are already in the workforce for new jobs in expanding industries and providing access to careers for those looking to enter the workforce.

“Middle-skill” jobs, which require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree, make up the largest part of the labor market in the United States and in each of the 50 states. All too often, key industries are unable to find enough sufficiently trained workers to fill these jobs.¹ In all, 53% of jobs in today's labor market are middle-skill and only 43% of U.S. workers are trained at this level.²

Without a skilled and trained workforce, the nation's cities, towns and villages will face serious challenges when it comes to attracting and retaining businesses and staying economically competitive. According to federal government estimates, 4.6 million additional trained workers will be needed by 2022 to keep pace with current hiring needs in the infrastructure sector alone.³

The American people understand the importance and the urgency of this issue: 93% of voters support increasing investments in skills training.⁴

Because of the diversity of local economies, the federal government needs to empower local workforce solutions, streamline federal funding, and drive new resources to proven approaches in our communities.

TO ADVANCE WORKFORCE READINESS IN THE FACE OF CHANGING ECONOMIC FORCES AND TECHNOLOGY, WE ASK THE PRESIDENT TO:

Boost investment in and awareness of apprenticeship programs that provide a pathway to successful careers, including industry and sector partnerships and pre-apprenticeship programs for workers with barriers to employment.

- ➔ Registered apprenticeships have an 80-year history as an effective approach to meeting growing workforce needs and connecting workers to good jobs and careers. With increased funding and awareness in recent years, apprenticeships continue to grow in number and expand into new and emerging industries including health, technology, finance and transportation.⁵

¹ National Skills Coalition, *Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs: State by State Snapshots*

² National Skills Coalition, “Skills for Good Jobs, Agenda 2019”

³ Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, *Advancing CTE in State and Local Career Pathways*

⁴ National Skills Coalition press release, *Likely 2020 Voters Overwhelmingly Support Increasing Investment in Skills Training*

⁵ Jobs for the Future, Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning

- ➔ Cities, towns and villages seek increased federal investment and commitment for these time-tested programs to address workforce needs across diverse American communities.

Expand Pell grants and other financial aid programs to cover needed workforce skills training, such as short-term programs leading to certificates.

- ➔ Many higher education and short-term certificate training programs are not covered by financial aid, but they are often the stepping-stone to workforce re-entry, a better job and a meaningful wage.⁶
- ➔ By expanding the Pell grant program, the federal government can ensure that more individuals gain access to critical training and education so they can access skilled jobs that remain unfilled in our communities. Workers need more support to respond to changes in technology that require updated skill sets.

Create new pathways to successful careers for unemployed and underemployed Americans through expanded investments in skills training and wraparound supports, such as childcare and transportation.

- ➔ By creating skills training and new pathways to middle-skill jobs for individuals facing barriers to employment, the President has the opportunity to meet urgent employment gaps that exist across America's communities.
- ➔ Additional wraparound services like expanded childcare can be a game changer for individuals who might not otherwise be able to enter the workforce.

⁶ [*Center for Law and Social Policy, Short-Term Education and Training Programs as Part of a Career Pathway*](#)