



The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States Congress
Washington, D.C. 20510

July 8, 2021

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker of the House Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge Congress to include \$100 billion, as President Biden has requested, for workforce development in upcoming infrastructure and economic recovery legislation. This funding is necessary to ensure American workers– including rural Americans, youth, women, and people of color–can equitably prepare for, secure and retain good jobs, while rebuilding America’s infrastructure and our economy.

The recent agreement between a bipartisan group of Senators and the White House on an infrastructure package is historic. It will create millions of middle class jobs, while rebuilding our roads and bridges, expanding broadband access, and delivering clean drinking water to communities across America. The White House and Congress are also negotiating significant investments in clean energy, healthcare, and child and family care. However, these investments must take into account two issues critical to the success of those very efforts:

- 1) **Without an investment in workforce development and policy, employers will struggle to find the qualified workers needed to fill infrastructure, clean energy, care and other in-demand jobs now and in the coming years.** An [analysis](#) by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce finds that in a \$1.3 trillion infrastructure plan, [more than half](#) of the jobs created will require some form of short-term training, and the remainder will require six months to two years of training. While [many workers](#) already have the skills to do these jobs, they may still lack the credentials to prove it– and employers and the workforce system lack the ability to identify these workers at scale. Millions more workers will need to develop their skills.
- 2) **Upcoming legislation must ensure that millions of people hit hardest by the pandemic will have a fair shot at accessing good jobs and careers, including millions created by an infrastructure plan.** Just months before the pandemic, [nearly half](#) of American workers earned “low wages”-- a group who were, in turn, among the [hardest hit](#) by the pandemic, along with [women, people of color](#), people from all backgrounds [without college degrees, returning citizens](#), and other workers with barriers to employment. Meanwhile, [90%](#) of infrastructure jobs are currently held by men, and people of color are typically [excluded](#) from the highest paying jobs. Even though women account for a [bulk](#) of the jobs lost during the pandemic, the [majority](#) of new jobs created by the infrastructure package would be in fields that are currently male-dominated. Without a

dedicated workforce development investment, new employment will not equitably include those who need help the most.

We know what works to ensure an economic recovery and an infrastructure package that extends opportunity to all Americans. Proven models can deliver success for employers and workers alike through evidence-based policy and programs focused on good jobs - including jobs supported by legislation under consideration in Congress. This includes jobs-driven sectoral training programs, apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, earn-and-learn opportunities with wraparound supports, workforce intermediaries, and putting in place systems that deliver access to good jobs and effective programs at large scale. Insufficient funding causes otherwise good programs to fail.

In his American Jobs Plan, President Biden proposes a \$100 billion workforce development investment. We also know that this idea -- and scale of funding -- is incredibly popular. Earlier this year, [Gallup](#) found that a strong, bipartisan majority (93%) of the public supports a large-scale, ambitious plan to pay people to work and provide them with the skills needed for jobs of the future. Meanwhile, the U.S. ranks near [last](#) of OECD countries for investment in workforce development as a percentage of GDP. The best way to get our economy moving again is to put Americans to work--immediately and for the long-run, in jobs that build careers and rebuild our economy.

As negotiations continue over the next few weeks, we are concerned that effective, meaningful investments in workforce development may be left behind, jeopardizing the success of the entire infrastructure package and the economic recovery more generally. Americans will not experience the gains of an economic recovery and infrastructure package if they cannot access the jobs created. And if we fail to act, and to do so boldly, those who need help the most will continue to struggle. There is clear evidence on what works to help Americans prepare for, secure and retain good jobs, but high-performing, demand-driven programs require proper investment. A comprehensive and effective workforce development investment is critical to the success of an infrastructure and economic recovery plan. We urge you to strongly support its necessary inclusion.

Signed,

America Achieves
New America
Advance CTE
All Home California
Alternative Schools Network
Apprenticeship Carolina (South Carolina Technical College System)
Association for Enterprise Opportunity
Center on Rural Innovation
Closing the Women's Wealth Gap
Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
Democracy at Work Institute
Generation USA
Genesys Works
Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
Goodwill Industries International
Grads of Life
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)
Jobs for the Future
Merit America
National Fund for Workforce Solutions
National Skills Coalition

National Youth Employment Coalition
NPower
Nurture: Building Financial Security and Mobility in the Child Care Economy
Opportunity@Work
Pacific Community Ventures
Per Scholas
PolicyLink
Program on Skills, Credentials & Workforce Policy, George Washington Institute of Public Policy
REDF
Sandra Grace, LLC
The Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA)
Year Up
YouthBuild USA

CC:

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chair, Senate Committee on the Budget

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chair, House Committee on the Budget

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Budget

The Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Budget

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Robert “Bobby” Scott
Chair, House Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member, House Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Members of the United States Congress