



## WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

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## CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) INVESTMENT

### Business Nexus

Robust investment in CTE programs can quickly train and return citizens impacted from the COVID-19 Pandemic into productive careers, while simultaneously providing the essential workforce needed to execute proposed infrastructure programs to repair our nation's crumbling roads, bridges, schools, and other essential infrastructure needed to regain the Sacramento Region's pre-COVID-19 economic boom.

### Requested Action

#### Significantly Increase Funding for Perkins CTE State Grants in FY 2022

The Perkins Basic State Grant program is the principal source of dedicated federal funding for CTE, which helps build the capacity of secondary and post-secondary institutions to serve millions of students nationwide and is more important than ever given the current economic climate. Perkins Basic State Grant funds are allocated to all 50 states through a need-based formula and are designed to help ensure all students have the academic, technical and employability skills they will need for career success. Increasing Perkins funding will expand access to high-quality CTE programs to a greater number of secondary, post-secondary, and adult learners. It will strengthen the capacity of school districts and post-secondary institutions to deliver academically rigorous CTE content, ensure support for special populations, afford the latest technology and equipment for the classroom, strengthen employer partnerships, provide college and career counseling services, deliver educator professional development opportunities, and ensure students have the skills needed in the 21st century economy. By preparing individuals for further education and rewarding careers, CTE is a smart investment for the future—for learners, families, employers, and the nation. Therefore, to empower states and CTE educators to effectively implement high-quality CTE programs, we urge Congress to support our students and future workforce by significantly increasing funding for the Perkins Basic State Grant program in FY 2022 as part of a campaign to double the investment in CTE.

## \$100B for Robust COVID-19 Relief Funds for Education and Workforce Development Systems

A staggering number of workers – particularly historically underserved workers of color, young people, women, and immigrants – have lost jobs that aren't coming back. An equitable recovery for these populations will be mostly served through the local workforce system and its stakeholders. There are nearly 10 million workers who are currently unemployed with more than 1/3 of the jobs permanently lost in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Permanent job loss means workers will need to reskill and upskill to enter new industries. Of workers over 25 who are unemployed, more than 44 percent have no education past high school. Yet, based on projections and lessons learned from past economic downturns, almost all the jobs created in recovery efforts will require some education past high school.

Prior to the pandemic, businesses were experiencing difficulty recruiting skilled workers, with the challenge to hire exacerbated during the pandemic. Manufacturing, energy and construction executives stated that finding skilled workers were a top concern going into the pandemic and in 2021. Across industries, a key requirement of the workforce is proficiency in digital skills to be successful in jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Anticipated industry changes – such as technological adoption – and proposed federal investment will even further add to this challenge. Analyses of previous infrastructure deals suggests that for every \$100 billion invested, 1 million new jobs are created, the majority of which require some training after high school. Employment in healthcare occupations will grow 15 percent from 2019 to 2029, adding 2.4 million new jobs.

Investing in workers' access to skills that meet industry demand must be a component of the federal response to the current crisis. Workers themselves agree - according to polling commissioned in the summer of 2020, 84 percent of unemployed workers want Congress to immediately increase investments in training to support their journey back into the workforce.

The nation's workforce system - convened through workforce development boards, career and technical education providers, adult basic education providers, and the nation's community colleges - stands poised to address this need, but desperately needs federal investment to meet this demand. Further compounding the funding issues is a two-decade history of declining federal investment in the workforce system.

Except for an initial investment of \$345 million, Congress has not funded workforce development in any of its COVID-19 response packages to date. A \$100 billion investment in workforce development would mean Congress lives up to its responsibility to workers, to businesses and to communities across the country in the COVID-19 recovery.



## Invest in an Infrastructure Workforce Pipeline by Supporting CTE Programs of Study & School Facilities

Addressing the deficiencies in our nation's vital infrastructure will require more than just new investments in roads, bridges, airports, and waterways. It must also include a commitment to developing the skilled workforce that can design, build, upgrade, and maintain that infrastructure. Local CTE programs are well positioned to equip students and incumbent workers with the educational opportunities and work-based learning they will need for career success in infrastructure fields. Federal infrastructure legislation should include dedicated resources to develop and expand CTE programs of study that are essential to creating a robust workforce pipeline to rebuild our infrastructure and secure its sustainability for the future. Additionally, any comprehensive infrastructure proposal should include our nation's public schools, whose average age is nearly 50 years old. The condition of school buildings provides a crucial foundation for classroom learning, health and safety that affects students and the American economy, which is why their prioritization is critical. The Rebuild America's Schools Act (H.R. 604) should be incorporated into future infrastructure legislation.