



# A FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

There are nearly **11 million job vacancies** and **more than 6 million people unemployed** in the U.S. Despite the urgent need for workers, many businesses are unable to hire people seeking work because applicants lack access to the necessary training programs. This problem will only continue to grow.

## Businesses need Congress to invest aggressively and effectively in the skills that industries demand and workers need.

Current funding levels for skills training programs are inadequate and pale in comparison to the investments other industrialized countries are making in their own workforces.

Increased investments will strengthen the workforce by:

- Growing training programs that help workers gain new skills for their current jobs and advance in their careers;
- Covering the costs of training so that those who are displaced and/or unemployed can reskill; and
- Establishing digital skills programs that prepare individuals with both the foundational and occupation specific skills necessary for 21st century jobs.

**ACTION:** Increase funding in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), career and technical education (CTE), and adult education state grants — returning to Fiscal Year 2001 levels.

## Businesses need Congress to support industry-led partnerships that drive industry-specific training and hiring

Industry and Sector Partnerships convene stakeholders such as employers, labor organizations, community colleges, and workforce boards to identify local workforce needs, expand access to necessary training, boost attainment of relevant licensures and credentials, and provide work supports.

Investing in partnerships between business, workforce, and education will:

- Develop, establish, and scale basic and occupation specific skills training based on the needs of local industry;
- Provide access to work support services, like transportation, childcare, and career counseling; and
- Grow the workforce by improving access to training for lower income participants.

**ACTION:** Pass the ACCESS to Careers Act, the PARTNERS Act, and the Community-Based Workforce Development Act to provide resources to industry and sector partnerships to establish and expand program activities.

## Businesses need Congress to modernize higher education and training policies to better align with industry demand

Most jobs require some educational attainment beyond a high school diploma but less than a college degree. Most short-term programs do not qualify for federal financial aid, and many businesses are unable to offer training in-house. As a result, many workers have no choice but to either forgo continued career training or pay out of pocket and potentially incur debt.

Expanding Pell Grant eligibility to individuals participating in short-term training programs will help workers quickly get the skills that businesses need. In addition, the College Transparency Act (CTA) will create a secure, federal data system to provide a range of information such as wages and earnings data by field of study to help students identify in-demand occupations and reduce the skills mismatch.

**ACTION:** Make Pell Grants available for high-quality, short-term training programs by passing the bipartisan JOBS Act and help students make informed decisions about their college education by passing the CTA.

*Business Leaders United is an initiative of the National Skills Coalition. We are a network of business leaders across industry sectors promoting inclusive, high-quality skills training policies that help build the skilled workforce that employers need to grow and thrive.*