

January 5, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Jeffries, and Leader Schumer:

As representatives of a broad coalition encompassing workers, workforce development boards, state and local governments, community and technical colleges, adult educators, labor and labor-management partnerships, community-based organizations, and businesses, the 175 undersigned organizations urge you to invest in our nation's workforce development and education systems.

Federally funded workforce and education programs play a critical role in helping workers access training and supportive services like transportation and childcare that they need to succeed in these programs. These programs are especially important for individuals who face barriers to employment while also supporting employers to meet their current and future hiring needs. Programs like these help a laid-off worker retrain for an IT job in a growing sector, or a single parent train for a stable, well-paying career in health care. Key examples include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Adult Education, Career and Technical Education, Job Corps, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, Reentry Employment Opportunities, Indian and Native American Programs, National Farmworker Jobs Program and Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants.

The economy is shifting in ways that make these programs even more important. Job growth is occurring in sectors like healthcare that generally require different skillsets than those in industries experiencing contraction, such as mining and oil and gas. Individuals displaced may not have the skillsets needed to immediately change industries, but workforce programs can help workers identify transferable skills, reskill, and upskill for new roles.

At the same time that we see slowed growth in some industries, advances in automation and artificial intelligence are rapidly changing the skills needed across industries. Yet far too many workers still have not had the opportunity to build the foundational skills and supports necessary to adapt. Roughly 28% of U.S. adults have low literacy proficiency, 34% have low numeracy proficiency, and nearly one-third lack foundational digital skills, even though 92% of jobs now require them.

Expanding access to education and training is essential to help workers build literacy, numeracy, and digital fluency, and to prepare them for in-demand jobs. Workforce programs are also critical to ensuring that current workers and those not in the labor force can train, retrain, and upskill throughout their careers and remain resilient in the face of economic and technological change.

Despite this growing need, the United States has chronically underinvested in its workforce and education systems and now lags significantly behind our global peers. To match the average level of investment among OECD countries, the U.S. would need to invest \$72 billion more annually in workforce development. Instead, funding for US workforce programs has stagnated or been cut over the past two decades. This is in spite of broad support from the public. According to recent polling, 82% of voters support increased federal funding for skills training programs including 91% of Democrats, 83% of Independents, and 74% of Republicans. Falling behind on investment means falling behind on innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth.

Robust investments in workforce and education programs not only support workers, but also businesses, families, and communities. These programs expand opportunity, reduce barriers to employment, and help employers meet their talent needs while also strengthening the broader economy. We urge you to ensure that federal workforce and education programs are funded at levels that reflect their importance, so that every worker and employer can thrive in a rapidly changing economy.

Sincerely,

160 Driving Academy
211 New York Inc.
AccuRounds
Ada Developers Academy
Advance CTE
AFSCME
Allegany County Employment & Training
American Society for Nondestructive Testing
AmeriClense Technologies
ANEW Board
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Atlanta Center for Self Sufficiency
Automation Workz
Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy
Barry County Chamber and EDA

Bay Cove
Boston Centerless
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships
Building Skills Partnership (BSP)
California EDGE Coalition
California Immigrant Policy Center
Calumet Area Industrial Commission
Capital Area Michigan Works!
Capital Region Workforce Development Board
Capital Workforce Partners
CARDBoard Project
Career Link
Carroll County Adult Education
CDO Workforce
Centennial Job Corps
Center for Caregiver Advancement
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
Center of Workforce Innovations
Chance2Change
Chemeketa Community College
Chinese Mutual Aid Association
Colorado Urban Workforce Alliance
Community Psychology Research
Cook County bureau of economic development
Covenant Collaborative Consulting and Training LLC
Cuyahoga Community College: Ohio Options for Adult
Daniel Macy Career Counselor, LLC
Detroit Green Skills Alliance
District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund
Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County
Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board
EASTCONN
EdAdvance
Education and Workforce Solutions LLC
EduNet Technologies
Employment & Employer Services (E&ES)
Essential Education Corporation
'Ewalu Industries
Fiesler's Forge Ltd.
FMS Workforce Development Board, Inc.
Gadsden State Community College
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
Golden Sierra Job Training Agency

Gray-New Gloucester Adult & Community Education
Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works!
GRID Alternatives
GST Michigan Works!
IEC Chesapeake
IL Community Health Workers Association
Impact Behavioral Health Partners
Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute
Inner Voice
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)
JobTrain
Jones Rehab Inc
JVS SoCal
Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI)
Kinexus Group
Kolve consulting
Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development
LIFT Inc
Linda M. Hogan Consulting
Literacy Council of Reading-Berks, Inc.
Literacy Pittsburgh
Literacy Source
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Lupson and Associates LLC
Manufacturing Renaissance
Massachusetts Department of Career Services
Michigan College Access Network
Michigan Works! Association
Middletown Adult Education
Midwest Urban Strategies, Inc
Mundelein Consolidated High School District #120
Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce
National Association of Regional Councils
National Center for Construction Education and Research
National Coalition for Literacy
National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers
National Council on Aging
National Fund for Workforce Solutions
National Skills Coalition
National Working Positive Coalition
National Youth Employment Coalition
New Mexico Adult Education Association
New Mexico Caregivers Coalition
New Moms

New Orleans Career Center
New York City Employment and Training Coalition
NOCTI
NOCTI Business Solutions (NBS)
Northern Kentucky Area Development District
Northwest Oregon Works
Norwich Regional Adult Education
NOVAworks.org
OAI, inc
Oceana College Access Network
OhioLiving
Opportunity@Work
Oswego County Workforce New York
Ouachita Workforce Development Board 81
Partner4Work
Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Workforce Office
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Nat'l Assn
PODER
Progressive Foam Technologies Inc.
ProLiteracy
Pui Tak Center
Quality Improvement Strategies
RCSD OACES
RecycleForce
Regional Adult and Career Education
Restore Education
Right Here, Right Now Project
Riverside Community College District
Riverside County Workforce Development Board
Riverside Immigrant Services & Empowerment
Rochester Rehabilitation Center, In
Rutgers
scaleLIT
Second Chance Center
Second Start
SHINE
Sinai Urban Health Institute
Skills2Compete Coalition
Skillspire
Smooth Transitions LLC
Southeast Community Services
Southside Programs for Adult Continuing Education
State Business Executives
SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center

Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA)
The Business Council of New York State, Inc.
The Corps Network
The CT Association for Adult & Cont. Education
The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon
The TLP Group
Tipping Point Community
Transition services, inc.
United Way for Southeastern Michigan
United Way of Central Iowa
United Way of CT
United Way of New York State
United Ways of Texas
University at Buffalo
Vail Valley Partnership
West Michigan Works!
Wilmington Alliance
Women Employed
WORK Inc.
Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio
Workforce Development Board HMO
Workforce Solutions Group
Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston
Worldscapes LLC