

Title: Support Funding for Workforce Programs
Subtitle: Support Workforce Investments in FY2018
Programmatic Request
Deadline: March 30th COB

Dear Colleague,

Please join us in requesting the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to provide substantial investments in federal workforce programs authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Fiscal Year 2018.

In 2014, Congress demonstrated broad bipartisan support for job training programs by passing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA outlines a vision for a demand-driven workforce system that is responsive to the needs of employers and can help workers access available jobs and credentials.

Middle skill jobs—those requiring more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree—make up 53 percent of today’s labor market, but only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at this level. Workforce funding is key to making sure job training programs have the capacity to meet U.S. employer needs.

Specifically, our letter urges House Appropriators to:

- Fund WIOA Title I employment and training programs, Title II adult education and literacy programs, Title III Wagner/Peyser Employment Services, and Title IV vocational rehabilitation programs and services for adults and students with disabilities;
- Reinvest current levels in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grants to enable states to provide useful information about skills, employment, and earning outcomes to help businesses fill skilled positions;
- Expand apprenticeships by increasing Congressional investment to \$100 million for FY 2018; and
- Continue to provide \$1 million for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program to help employers and labor unions recruit, train, and retain women for nontraditional employment opportunities.

If you would like additional information or to sign the letter, please contact Maxine Sugarman in Rep. Bonamici’s office at Maxine.Sugarman@mail.house.gov or Elizabeth Connolly in Rep. Blunt Rochester’s office at Elizabeth.Connolly@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

DATE

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We write to request your continued support for federal workforce programs authorized by the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide substantial investments in job training programs in the final bill. As the Appropriations Committee continues their hard work to draft an FY2018 budget while completing the FY2017 budget, and without a detailed budget submission from the President until later this year, our constituents and agencies are faced with great uncertainty. During this challenging budgeting process, the importance of investing in our workforce must not be forgotten.

FY 2018 reflects a critical point in our nation's workforce investment strategy, with states and localities still implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and adapting to the recently released final regulations. Adequate funding is key for this potential to be realized – making the outcome of this year's budget and appropriations process critically important.

Middle skill jobs—those requiring more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree—make up 53 percent of today's labor market, but only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at this level. That leaves businesses struggling to find workers with appropriate skills, and it leaves workers without meaningful pathways to better-paying jobs. Workforce funding is key to making sure job training programs have the capacity to meet U.S. employer needs.

Maintaining funding for WIOA implementation is necessary for states to fully carry out congressional reforms. Doing so will improve our nation's economic competitiveness and put in place comprehensive workforce strategies that support national priorities, such as rebuilding our infrastructure. With meaningful investments, programs across the nation will help workers gain the skills to support themselves and their families and ensure employers will have access to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

Specifically, we respectfully request that you:

- Fund WIOA Title I employment and training programs at the authorized levels so states, localities, and other partners can fully realize the bipartisan vision outlined by WIOA;
- Support adult education and literacy programs under WIOA Title II at the authorized levels so Americans are able to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities;

- Provide no less than \$680 million to Wagner/Peyser Employment Services activities under Title III of WIOA to give states necessary, additional resources to operate WIOA's intensive reemployment services;
- Fund vocational rehabilitation program and other employment services at levels authorized under WIOA Title IV for adults and students with disabilities;
- Reinvest current levels in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grants to enable states to provide useful information about skills, employment, and earning outcomes to help businesses fill skilled positions;
- Expand apprenticeships by increasing Congressional investment to \$100 million for FY 2018; and
- Continue to provide \$1 million for the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program to help employers and labor unions recruit, train, and retain women for nontraditional employment opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. We look forward to working with you as we invest in the U.S. workforce to meet the needs of America's workers and employers today and into the future.

Sincerely,