



MAY 2016

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Policies that Work: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

BLU's [second brief](#) in the *Policies that Work* series explores the newly revised Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the specific ways in which employers can leverage the policy to address the skills gap in their industry.

Read BLU's previously released brief on making Pell Grants work [here](#).



BLU headlines the 2016 Best Practices Conference

The [conference](#), hosted by the [Mid-American Economic Development Council](#) and the [Ohio Workforce Coalition](#),



was held on May 18-20 and focused on workforce development as a key driver of economic development. The opening plenary was hosted by BLU and moderated by National Skills Coalition (NSC) National Field Director, Jessie Leslie. BLU employers Erick Ajax (MN) and Dwight Dinsmore (OH) were featured along with Janice Urbanik of Partners for a Competitive Workforce (OH). The Conference also featured a workforce policy plenary led by NSC State Policy Director, Bryan Wilson.

BLU welcomes Michael Kenig to the Executive Committee

[Michael Kenig](#) is the Vice Chairman of Holder Construction Company, a nationally ranked commercial construction services firm. He also serves on the Advisory Council of Go Build Georgia – a campaign designed to educate young people on the value of learning a trade.



Kenig is chair of the Associated General Contractors of America Owner's Council, a member of the Construction Users Roundtable's (CURT) Workforce Development Committee and a member of the Construction Owner's Association of America (COAA).

Michael recently [wrote](#) about the value of career and technical education. You can also read his BLU employer profile [here](#).

BLU on the Hill

On April 13, BLU Executive Committee member Erick Ajax and several other Minneapolis-based manufacturers spent the day meeting with key members of Congress, including committee staff for Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY) to discuss the importance of career and technical education (CTE) investments in meeting the skill needs of today's small and medium sized manufacturers.



The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is the primary federal program governing investments in CTE at the secondary and postsecondary level. The \$1.1 billion dollar program was last reauthorized in 2006, and lawmakers have prioritized updating the law with an intent to strengthen connections between CTE programs and local employers, and create greater opportunities for internships and other work-based learning models.

Erick and other members of the delegation shared their experiences in developing and implementing industry-led workforce partnerships, including the [M-Powered program](#) in Minneapolis, which supports sector-specific training for workers in the manufacturing industry.

