

A Stronger Workforce for America Act

Background

When the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) was enacted in 2014, it made crucial improvements to streamline the maze of federal workforce development programs and enhance accountability through a single set of performance metrics. However, almost a decade later, significant challenges persist that impede the workforce system's ability to provide high-quality services to job seekers and employers.

The Problem

Employers are struggling to fill the jobs they need to grow their businesses and meet workers' upskilling needs, hampering critical industries, and undermining our economic competitiveness. The workforce system under WIOA, which exists to address these challenges, needs reform to ensure workers—including those without a bachelor's degree—can access good-paying jobs.

The Solution

A Stronger Workforce for America Act makes critical updates to WIOA that will increase the amount of skills development provided under the law, strengthen connections between employers and the workforce system, and put more Americans on the pathway to a successful career.

Specifically, *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*:

- Upgrades the skills of the American workforce by dedicating 50 percent of the adult and dislocated worker funding towards upskilling workers and related wrap-around supports.
- Creates an emphasis on employer-led initiatives that equip workers with the skill sets to fill jobs in critical industries and help the currently employed workforce upskill to avoid displacement and advance their careers.
- Ensures workers displaced from their jobs through no fault of their own can access robust skill development services, including through "individual training accounts."
- Increases accountability, quality, and efficiency by streamlining the "eligible training provider list" to ensure programs are aligned with the skill and hiring demands and fully implementing the performance accountability system to hold states and local workforce boards accountable for achieving positive outcomes for program participants.
- Strengthens pathways to continue economic opportunity by emphasizing work-based learning and apprenticeship for youth, codifying a program to help individuals released from incarceration transition back to employment, and enhancing workforce programs at community colleges that align with in-demand jobs.
- Fuels innovation for a skills-based economy by creating a pilot authority for targeted state and local boards to reimagine their workforce systems and providing technical assistance to employers on implementing skills-based hiring practices.

Bottom Line

This bipartisan legislation provides essential updates and improvements to WIOA that will strengthen the workforce development system, encourage innovation, and offer career opportunities for millions of Americans.