

## Invest in Workforce and Skills Development

An investment in the nation's physical infrastructure must also simultaneously invest in our human capital infrastructure

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an inequitable impact on workers, especially those without an education past high school, workers of color, and women. Workers with a high school degree or less have been displaced at nearly [three times](#) the rate as those with a bachelor's and minority workers, particularly women of color, have shouldered the greatest job losses due to their concentration in low-wage service industries that have been [hardest hit](#) by the economic downturn. During these unprecedented times, it is evident that workers need skills to access the employment opportunities that exist or will be created as the economy rebounds.

In addition to creating jobs, a successful infrastructure and economic development package will invest in training and pathways to employment that ensure local workers who are unemployed or seeking upgraded employment can successfully secure these critical jobs. Congress can enable infrastructure investments that will increase local employment, business contracts and overall investment in the economy by ensuring investment meets the current demand.

### PRIORITIES

- **Support a \$15 billion investment in immediate capacity for our public workforce system**, workforce development boards, community college/career and technical and adult education systems to respond to historic worker and business needs through the Relaunching America's Workforce Act. (H.R. 6646/S. 3659).
- **Support a \$35 billion investment** to provide workers, especially those who have historically faced barriers and those most affected by the pandemic, with the pathways and support needed to **access good-paying infrastructure, manufacturing and clean energy jobs**.
- **Meet the national training needs and support \$50 billion for training for workers** who are unemployed, underemployed, or most at risk for losing their jobs to reskill and upskill for new careers of the 21st century.
- **Eliminate the local/targeted hire prohibition** and create clear guidance for federal grant recipients interested in using local/targeted hire to boost investments in local workers and businesses.

### LEGISLATION NLC SUPPORTS

- **H.R. 6646/S. 3659 – Relaunching America's Workforce Act** (bipartisan) - invests \$15 billion in the nation's workforce development system as a supplemental measure to ensure that our nation's workforce development system can respond to the increased demands associated with COVID-19.

- **H. R. 447 - National Apprenticeship Act of 2021** (bipartisan) - invests more than \$3.5 billion over 5 years in expanding opportunities and access to Registered Apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships. The proposal would create nearly 1 million new apprenticeship opportunities on top of the current expected growth of the apprenticeship system.
- **Emergency Economic and Workforce Resiliency Act** – invests additional workforce dollars in states and localities for layoff aversion/prevention activities based on projections of local labor markets, sector analyses.
- **Building U.S. Infrastructure by Leveraging Skills (BUILDS) Act** (bipartisan) - invests in skills and supports workers need to meet business demand in infrastructure industries. The legislation provides grants to help train workers and support services — like childcare, pre-employment training, transportation, and career counseling — to help workers succeed in work-based learning programs.
- **Build Local, Hire Local Act** - ensure that federal infrastructure investments put low-income communities first and prioritize local workers and disadvantaged businesses. NLC Statement.

## LEADERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

- **Mayor Brandon Bochenski, City of Grand Forks, ND**, on workforce recruitment and retention:

"We need to complement our economic development efforts with workforce development initiatives to make sure we have a talented and strong workforce for employers. To that, there is no more critical entity than UND to the further development of our workforce. We are proud of our partnerships with UND on projects and operations that are beneficial to both the campus and community – which in the end will help them attract and retain students and give us more opportunities to keep young and talented people here in Grand Forks. Our investment in the Nistler College of Business and Public Administration gets the City on UND's campus and provides a front door to the community. This also gives the community an opportunity to work more collaboratively with the university on workforce recruitment and retention."

- **Mayor Amy Goodwin, City of Charleston, WV**, on the need for investments in training:

"The Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development, in coordination with organizations like the Charleston Area Alliance and Charleston Main Streets, work to bring people here to live, work and play. For the past year our team has been leading a citywide initiative that is focusing on workforce development, employment training and job placement. This effort includes a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from education, business, workforce training and youth. The key goals are to promote the wide range of existing workforce training programs and to connect trained individuals with local employers. To date, the initiative has created three subgroups - construction, tourism/hospitality and health care."

- **Mayor Erin Mendenhall, City of Salt Lake City, UT**, on apprenticeships:

"Economic opportunity will undoubtedly be one of the biggest focus areas of that work. As a City government, we must be committed to fostering a community where everybody has the opportunity to thrive. The City Council last year approved funding for an apprenticeship program to provide on-the-job training and create a pipeline to permanent employment opportunities for individuals who need an alternative pathway into the job force. I'm excited that this program has officially launched, and people will be able to apply for positions as they become available. We'll also continue focusing on representation in the government's workforce as we further our work on equitable recruitment and hiring practices and provide more access to training opportunities with the implementation of a Workforce Evolution Plan."