

Governors' Principles to Renew the Federal Workforce System

Elevating Governor and State Leadership

- Consult governors – the leaders of each state's workforce and talent development system – throughout the development and administration of federal workforce and job training programs.
- Support governors in leveraging their State Workforce Development Board as their central strategic leadership and coordination body for facilitating partnership and alignment across industry leaders and workforce development, postsecondary education, K-12 education, and human services partners.
- Maintain governors' authority to oversee federal workforce programs and to appoint State Workforce Development Board members and direct the work of the board.

Increasing State Flexible Funding and Unleashing Innovation

- Significantly increase the governors' reserve for statewide activities to ensure state- and territory-wide innovation to prepare communities, employers, and workers for the future of work. Additional governors' reserve funding would increase statewide training, technical assistance, monitoring and oversight, and expand industry and sector partnerships.
- Ensure that states and territories, especially those with smaller populations and those with single workforce areas, receive adequate administrative funding to ensure governors do not have to expend flexible workforce dollars on underfunded federal mandates.
- Ensure quality assurance in federally-supported workforce training programs by providing states and territories with greater flexibility to define standards for their Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPLs), and to allow for necessary innovation, such as virtual training programs.
- Support states and territories in advancing new strategies for accessing, using, and integrating key public and private workforce data sources to measure the effectiveness of workforce programs, improve them over time, and direct funding to those that are most successful.
- Fund the modernization of workforce information technology infrastructure to ensure better systems integration and coordinated service delivery.
- Invest in rigorous and comprehensive evaluations of federally-funded programs to build a robust evidence base of what works to inform future federal, state, territory, and local investments.
- Provide states and territories with the flexibility and authority to adeptly and expediently adapt when faced with states of emergency or unique situations that demand immediate action.
- Support state and territorial efforts to expand job training offerings and credentials through optional occupational licensing reciprocity agreements with other states and territories.

Empowering Employers to Develop Job-Specific Skills

- Leverage and expand federal support for apprenticeship and work-based learning programs, particularly state-, territory-, local-, and industry-led partnerships to create and scale these programs.
- Facilitate workforce system and employer partnerships to advance digital skills by partnering with industry leaders to broadly define types of digital skills and by providing resources to deliver foundational and occupational digital skills training to all jobseekers.
- Identify ways to reward employer participation in the creation, delivery, and financing of workforce development, including offering apprenticeship, on-the-job, or incumbent worker training programs.
- Provide additional federal funding and resources to states and territories for incumbent worker training and on-the-job training, including eligibility for public, private, and employer-based short-term credential programs that upskill workers on the job or before they begin working.

Facilitating Greater Alignment and Simplification

- Rethink the current federal workforce structure to allow for simplification of the workforce system for states, territories, employers, and workers while significantly increasing overall funding for federal workforce programs and preserving governor leadership.
- In reauthorizing existing legislation or developing new programs, prioritize alignment within or alongside existing state-led systems' infrastructure and avoid creating more siloes via separate funding streams, governance structures, and reporting requirements.
- Allow governors to reassess local workforce area designations to reflect changing economies and migration.
- Allow states and territories to reassess physical location, service-delivery methods, and types of programs and services offered in American Job Centers to ensure the national workforce infrastructure can meet the needs of each community.
- Provide consistent funding to support American Job Center staffing, such as hiring navigators to assist individuals in navigating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and co-located programs and services, such as cross-training of merit staff, so that they may assist individuals in accessing other programs for which they qualify.
- Support more consistent and transparent outcomes reporting on education and training programs by providing substantial formula funding and incentives for states and territories to create a unified statewide longitudinal data system.
- Provide clear guidance on infrastructure funding agreements among the WIOA partners, specifically on non-cash contributions.

Expanding Access to and Participation in Workforce Programs

- Facilitate a holistic support system for working families, including access to cash or nutrition assistance, health care, childcare, transportation, housing, and other essential supports.

- Work with states and territories to foster innovative solutions to better serve people with additional barriers to employment and training, including those leaving the criminal justice system, people with disabilities, working parents, opportunity youth, entrepreneurs, and the growing population of gig economy workers.
- Work to ensure the workforce development system is accessible for multi-lingual workers.
- Increase student flexibility to use federal higher education grants, Individual Training Accounts, and student loans, and provide new, innovative funding options for individuals to pay costs related to completing high-quality job training and work-based learning programs that demonstrate positive outcomes.
- Provide funding flexibility for externships and remote opportunities which provide greater exposure to job experiences, particularly for rural regions and areas outside of the 48 contiguous United States.
- Enable job seekers and employers to be served via phone, e-mail, video conferencing, and other virtual platforms to allow for increased capacity to serve more individuals and maximize outcomes.
- Support states and territories in leveraging a common intake system to reduce barriers for job seekers and ease use of referrals to workforce programs.