



**Committee on Workforce Innovation Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.**

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AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Opening RemarksDr. Windsor Sherrill, Committee Chair
- II. Approval of February 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes*Dr. Windsor Sherrill
- III. Discussion on Committee Priorities.....
 - a. American Talent Strategies Mr. Zach Nickerson
 - b. Explore how to maximize youth employment resources Ms. Laura Cox
- IV. Other Business/Adjourn.....Dr. Windsor Sherrill

*Denotes Voting Item

**Governor’s State Workforce Development Board
February 5, 2026, Workforce Innovation Committee Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Dr. Windsor Sherrill*, Chair
 Ms. Susan H. Cohen
 Col. Craig Currey
 Dr. Tim Hardee
 Mr. George Patrick “GP” McLeer, Jr.
 Mr. Jay Holloway
 Ms. Felicia Johnson
 Ms. Elaine Morgan

Members Absent:

Mr. Tyler Servant
 Sen. Ross Turner
 Ms. Britt Vergnolle

Welcome and Opening Remarks Dr. Windsor Sherrill, Committee Chair

Dr. Windsor Sherrill, Workforce Innovation Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Dr. Sherrill reminded members of the Committee Priorities for this program year.

Approval of October 30, 2025, Meeting Minutes* Dr. Sherrill

Ms. Susan Cohen motioned to approve the October 30, 2025, meeting minutes as submitted. Mr. Jay Holloway seconded the motion, and the Committee unanimously approved them.

SC Career Readiness Program Update..... Ms. Lashawn Thompson

During our first (1st) and second (2nd) quarterly meetings, Ms. Lashawn Thompson and Ms. Nina Staggers have been reviewing available data and information on the SC Career Readiness Program's credential achievement rates. Ms. Lashawn Thompson reviewed the five (5) key performance indicator metrics (KPIs) for the committee to consider when defining the success criteria for the SC Career Readiness Program priority.

The discussed KPIs are:

1. **Credential Attainment**
2. **Alignment of Achievement Levels with In-Demand Job Zones**
3. **Jobseeker Impact**
4. **Employer Utilization of the Job Analysis Tool**
5. **Employer Impact of Job Analysis**

Discussion:

After the presentation, the Committee discussed some of the challenges of the analysis aspects such as defining the size of the business, what the levels mean for different types of workforces, and how to get businesses to utilize these services. Mr. Holloway offered to have a job analysis completed for his company to see how it works from an employers point of view.

Other Business/Adjourn..... Dr. Sherrill

*Denotes Voting Item

Governor's State Workforce Development Board

February 5, 2026, Workforce Innovation Committee Meeting Minutes

Dr. Sherrill acknowledged that Chairman Thomas Freeland was provided an opportunity to give remarks. Chairman Freeland thanked everyone for their participation and is looking forward to seeing everyone at the in-person State Board Meeting on March 31st in Columbia.

Dr. Sherrill encouraged members to attend the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for February 26, 2026, and reminded members that the Board meeting on March 31st, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

DRAFT

AMERICA'S TALENT STRATEGY: BUILDING THE WORKFORCE FOR THE GOLDEN AGE



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

President Trump has set a bold economic strategy to reindustrialize America, dominate the artificial intelligence (AI) frontier, and reclaim control over the levers of national prosperity. Achieving this vision requires a workforce system capable of propelling American workers into high-wage careers, upholding the dignity of hard work, and delivering the talent businesses need to power the nation's economic resurgence.

This strategy lays out a comprehensive plan to address the workforce needs of American companies, integrate existing workforce development systems to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, provide accountability for workforce training programs, upskill incumbent American workers, and develop alternatives to 4-year college degrees. It rests on five strategic pillars:

- I. **Industry-Driven Strategies:** The workforce system must transform into a reliable pipeline of American talent led by industry and aligned with America's economic priorities. Existing workforce development programs are often misaligned with employer needs due to a lack of coordination between education systems, workforce agencies, and businesses. The current system is not positioned to prioritize industry needs and align federal workforce programs with private sector training investments and evolving skill demands.

This pillar of the vision will be achieved by scaling Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based learning models, aligning education and training programs to career pathways, and targeting federal investments toward employer-led upskilling initiatives designed to fill talent shortages in priority industries.

- II. **Worker Mobility:** More Americans must be brought into the labor force and be able to advance, including through the innovative use of technology and labor market data. The "college-for-all approach" has failed, and workers struggle to navigate a fragmented system of workforce supports and attain economic mobility. Millions of Americans remain disconnected from high-wage jobs and career paths, with an increasing number disengaged and disincentivized from returning to work.

This pillar of the vision will be achieved by clearly identifying credentials that are valued in the labor market to support informed decision making, integrating AI-powered tools and competency-based assessments that allow workers to advance based on demonstrated skills and abilities, and getting the disconnected workforce into training opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency.

III. **Integrated Systems:** The fragmented web of duplicative programs must be replaced with a streamlined, coordinated system that delivers unified workforce services. The current patchwork of federal workforce programs is spread across multiple federal agencies, and they attempt to serve similar purposes with incompatible rules and siloed data systems. As a result, job seekers must navigate a disjointed and bureaucratic system, while employers lack a unified access point to engage.

This pillar of the vision will be achieved by immediately working to streamline program administration and simplify governance requirements to empower states to integrate disparate funding streams and improve service delivery. Further restructuring and consolidating workforce programs must be achieved through the Make America Skilled Again (MASA) proposal and reorganizing federal statistical agencies within the Department of Commerce.

IV. **Accountability:** Agencies must ensure federally-funded workforce programs deliver measurable results by linking investments to outcomes and program performance. Billions of dollars are spent each year without reliable and consistent mechanisms to measure success or hold programs accountable when they fail. Training and education programs remain eligible for taxpayer funding regardless of whether they connect participants to high-wage jobs.

This pillar of the vision will be achieved by reforming or eliminating ineffective programs and redirecting funding to programs that demonstrate success in connecting Americans with high-wage jobs. It will require harmonizing performance measures and enhancing data linkages to ease the reporting burden while producing valid, transparent data to assess the return on investment and the impact on closing talent gaps. It also depends on ensuring all taxpayer-funded workforce services are reserved for individuals who are legally authorized to work, protecting high-paying jobs for American workers.

V. **Flexibility & Innovation:** New models of workforce innovation must be created to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation. AI is transforming work faster than the workforce system can adapt and workers will require new skills to share in the prosperity that AI will create. Without greater agility in the system, the United States risks falling behind in the race to develop an AI-ready workforce.

This pillar of the vision will be achieved by leveraging existing statutory authorities to promote flexibility and innovation, prioritizing AI literacy and skills development across the workforce system, and developing pilot projects to drive rapid reskilling and fuel other AI-era innovations.

America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age outlines how the Trump Administration will use existing authorities and funding to execute a bold transformation

of the nation's workforce system so that it delivers on the scale and urgency of President Trump's economic agenda. It connects investments in people to the engines of national strength: industry, innovation, and work. The goal is to build a durable system that expands our labor force, helps workers advance, supports employers in meeting their needs, and positions the country to lead in today's economy. Through these reforms, the Trump Administration will transform our national workforce investments to meet the talent needs of employers, empower more Americans to access high-wage careers, and reindustrialize the United States.

THE CHALLENGE

For decades, America has relied on a “college-for-all” model to prepare its workforce, but this approach has failed to meet the needs of both employers and workers. Meanwhile, workforce programs are fragmented across agencies, stifled by red tape, and too often misaligned with the skills employers need. These shortcomings pose particular risks as the United States advances toward a bold reindustrialization agenda and navigates the transformational impact of AI on the workforce. To realize the full potential of President Trump’s economic agenda, the Trump Administration must address the following challenges in the American workforce system.

Employers lack reliable talent pipelines to meet national economic goals

The United States lacks the talent pipelines needed to meet employers’ needs and fuel President Trump’s economic agenda. The Trump Administration believes that the workforce system must be stronger than ever to meet a new set of national objectives, including reshoring American industries to gain economic sovereignty and building American talent across the AI ecosystem. Under President Trump’s leadership, businesses are investing billions of dollars to revitalize U.S. manufacturing, production, and innovation, but many still struggle to find skilled technical workers. As these companies anchor our country’s reindustrialization, past approaches to workforce development have failed to prioritize industry needs or complemented their training investments to ensure economic prosperity. Forgotten in the midst of decades of failed federal workforce programming is the reality that it is the companies themselves within industry, not the government, that determine the skillsets and competencies needed for jobseekers to be adequately qualified for a position.

Millions of Americans remain disconnected from high-wage career paths

American workers cannot reliably connect to pathways to high-wage careers and too often remain on the sidelines of the labor force. For decades, America’s labor market relied on the university system to develop new generations of workers, but this “college-for-all” approach has failed, and the patchwork of non-college programs targeting occupation-specific skills is inadequate to replace it. Too many Americans, whether they are entering the labor market or trying to advance, struggle to navigate a fragmented system of workforce supports and attain economic mobility. An increasing number of Americans are disengaged and disincentivized from returning to work, with more than 21 million Americans aged 25 to 54 not participating in the labor force. At the same time, America’s workforce is aging, with millions of experienced workers retiring and fewer younger workers entering the pipeline to replace them. In order for our economy to enter its next Golden Age, it is imperative that more Americans enter the labor market.

The workforce system is fragmented

America's workforce development programs are spread across multiple federal agencies, funding streams, and statutory authorities, resulting in a system that is confusing to navigate, inefficient to operate, and difficult to manage. Programs that serve similar purposes often have incompatible rules, siloed data systems, and duplicative administrative requirements. Governors and state workforce leaders face complex compliance mandates that constrain their ability to integrate services or direct funding where it is needed most and instead duplicate the fragmented federal systems within their states. Job seekers encounter disjointed service delivery and must navigate multiple access points that fail to offer clarity on available opportunities or next steps. Employers encounter overlapping points of contact with no unified access point to engage with the system or shape workforce solutions. Despite widespread recognition of the need for integration, federal law and regulation continue to lock states and agencies into rigid programmatic silos. As a result, workforce dollars are spent through disconnected channels, limiting impact and frustrating both the entities that deliver services and the individuals and businesses that rely on them.

The workforce system lacks accountability

The federal workforce system lacks a reliable mechanism to measure, compare, and improve performance across programs. Billions of dollars are spent each year without a consistent standard for success or a clear way to hold programs accountable when they fail. Data collection is inconsistent across agencies, outcomes are often delayed or obscured by compliance-driven reporting, and providers face few consequences for failing to connect participants to high-wage jobs. Training providers with poor outcomes remain eligible for federal funds, programs with high per-participant costs continue without scrutiny, and policymakers lack the tools to understand where investments are creating impact. The federal government has spent nearly 50 years investing in expensive postsecondary programs that are not demanded by employers, divorcing the U.S. postsecondary education system from market dynamics. States have limited flexibility to direct funding toward high-performing models and little incentive to remove ineffective programs from eligible training provider lists. Employers cannot easily evaluate the effectiveness of workforce partnerships or credentials. In the absence of real performance accountability, too much of the system continues to function without delivering results, untethered from labor market outcomes and shielded from necessary reform.

AI is transforming work faster than the system can adapt

AI is reshaping the workforce, and continuous innovation is needed to help workers navigate its opportunities and challenges. AI represents a new frontier for workers, including new high-wage careers and enhanced productivity, but will also require new skills and transitions in the labor market for workers to share in the prosperity that AI will create. The greatest workforce

challenge of AI may be the speed of change itself. As AI accelerates shifts in job tasks and skill requirements, the education and workforce system must adapt in real time. Without significant reform to create more agility and innovation across the system, the United States risks falling behind in the race to develop an AI-ready workforce.

VISION FOR AMERICA'S WORKFORCE

To usher in the Golden Age of the American economy, President Trump will invest in American workers and celebrate the inherent dignity of hard work. Regardless of where a person begins—whether as a young adult entering the labor market, a veteran re-entering the civilian workforce, or a dislocated worker retraining for a new career—our Nation's workforce development system must invest in our country and put Americans first.

Companies expanding in America should be able to count on the workforce system to produce the skilled, job-ready talent needed to make their investments succeed. The system must work for businesses of all sizes, especially in sectors vital to restoring America's economic strength and national competitiveness. It must be held accountable for how well it delivers for employers and trains workers for jobs that will define America's economic future.

Delivering on this vision requires a new foundation for how the Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce (the Departments) design, govern, and fund America's workforce system. That foundation rests on five strategic pillars:

PILLAR I: Industry-Driven Strategies

The needs of employers must drive how the workforce system educates, trains, and prepares the American workforce. For this to occur, federal programs must be designed so that employers play a leading role in shaping and delivering training programs that help new and incumbent workers build the skills they need to succeed. The government should seek businesses' help to co-design work-based training and credentialing opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeships for new and incumbent workers. A paradigm shift is needed to move beyond the "train and pray" model that has too often defined workforce investments, where programs operate in isolation from industry needs and workers are left to hope that training leads somewhere. Federal workforce investments must prioritize talent pathways that start with companies identifying critical, hard-to-fill-demand occupations with high-wages that can be immediately filled upon successful completion of a training program by an aspiring worker. To support continuous learning and career resilience, training investments must be coordinated across businesses, educational institutions, joint labor-management partnerships, and workforce agencies.

To realize this pillar of the vision, employers must play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and steering investments toward the roles and credentials that matter most. The Trump Administration will prioritize support for pathways with clearly defined destinations, including those that feature explicit employer validation and offer job guarantees, interview guarantees, or other mechanisms that ensure training leads directly to employment opportunities. The Administration is focused on growing manufacturing and

adjacent industries, such as semiconductors, aerospace, shipbuilding, biopharmaceuticals, data centers, energy production, and other industries that serve as the foundation for American economic and national security. Many of these companies seek to invest and build in the United States with the assistance of the Department of Commerce's Investment Accelerator. The input and direction of these companies on how the workforce system evolves to meet their needs is critical for the success of the Trump Administration's workforce strategy.

Meeting these companies' short-term and long-term needs requires the workforce system to invest earlier and more intentionally in building career pathways, starting in middle school with exposure to real occupations and extending through high school and beyond with Registered Apprenticeships and industry-aligned training. Federal funding will prioritize results, rewarding programs that place workers directly into apprenticeships or other work-based learning opportunities that lead to in-demand jobs. The federal workforce system under the Trump Administration will be guided by the foremost goal of directing American talent into the private sector.

PILLAR II: Worker Mobility

The American workforce system must help more people enter, reenter, and advance within the labor market. Whether returning to the workforce or seeking better opportunities, individuals should be able to take tangible steps that lead to upward mobility and long-term economic independence.

Federal investments must deliver a next-generation workforce and labor market intelligence system that is timely, localized, and actionable. The system should help people see their skills, understand career options, and take clear steps toward better jobs. Employers should be able to use the same system to find qualified talent and make faster, smarter hiring decisions. Technology in the workforce system must be judged by how well it drives outcomes. Systems that are overly complex or built around abstract compliance requirements often end up underused or ignored. To serve workers and employers, digital tools must be simple, effective, and built for adoption and scale. Success depends not on technical sophistication, but on whether these systems help people move into better jobs and help businesses hire more efficiently.

To realize this pillar of the vision, the system must promote reemployment and career mobility through multiple avenues: work-based learning, short-term credentials, stackable training opportunities, and pathways that recognize prior experience and demonstrated ability. AI-powered tools and digital records will allow individuals to showcase what they know and have done, opening new opportunities and allowing them to advance without starting from scratch. A workforce system that supports continuous advancement, especially through innovative uses of technology and labor market data, will empower more Americans to move forward in today's economy.

PILLAR III: Integrated Systems

A modern workforce system must be unified, navigable, and built around the needs of its users. The American worker should be able to access training and employment opportunities without getting lost in a maze of government agencies or confusing websites. Employers should be able to engage with the system just as easily to find talent and grow their workforce. States and local leaders should be able to coordinate across funding streams without being stifled by duplicative mandates or disconnected systems.

This vision calls for a fundamental shift from fragmentation to alignment. Rather than operating in silos, federal, state, and local actors must work in concert to deliver a streamlined experience for those they serve. A single federal agency, the Department of Labor, must lead the coordination and implementation of all federal workforce development efforts to prevent taxpayer dollars from being squandered on bloated administrative functions across duplicative levels of government. With a shared framework and modernized infrastructure, the workforce system can function as a single, cohesive engine for American talent development that delivers measurable results, reduces administrative waste, and scales to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy.

To realize this pillar of the vision, the strategy will support shared eligibility standards across programs, streamlined intake processes, and digital tools that help frontline staff guide individuals to the right services. Federal agencies will offer modular utilities that reduce duplicative paperwork and make it easier to coordinate across programs. States will be encouraged to build unified online portals and create locations where people can access multiple services in one place and align the substantial training resources available through the Pell Grant program with career services available through the workforce system. Vouchers and shared labor exchange and case management tools will be promoted to help workers access training and support seamlessly, without navigating disconnected systems.

PILLAR IV: Accountability

Federal workforce funding should be aligned with outcomes. Programs that consistently deliver strong employment results should be expanded, while those that fail to show measurable impact should be reformed or ended. Outcomes must be evaluated using a consistent set of metrics across agencies, including job placement, earnings growth, credential attainment, and return on investment and should account for the number of workers achieving positive labor market outcomes through the funding provided. These results should be made transparent through public tools that allow workers, employers, and taxpayers to compare program performance and make informed decisions.

To realize this pillar of the vision, the system must track outcomes that matter to both workers and businesses. Public dashboards will show which programs are helping people get jobs

and earn higher wages and which ones are helping employers fill in-demand roles. Federal agencies will use consistent metrics to measure job placement, earnings growth, cost-effectiveness, and talent pipeline progress across all workforce investments. Credentials will be judged based on their real value in the labor market, and ineffective training providers will be removed from public funding lists. New funding models will tie resources to outcomes, including through the expanded use of pay-for-performance contracts and stronger recapture authority to redirect dollars from programs that fail to deliver.

PILLAR V: Flexibility & Innovation

The federal workforce system must be adaptable. America's economy is changing quickly, driven by AI, advanced industries, and new national priorities. The workforce system needs the tools and flexibility to keep up. It must be designed for continuous iteration, with exponentially faster feedback loops between employers, educators, and training providers to ensure that programs can evolve in step with economic shifts. Agility must become a core design principle of the education and workforce system. That means giving states and local communities more control to tailor solutions to their regional economies. Flexible funding models like MASA can empower governors to direct workforce investments toward business needs and eliminate duplicative or siloed efforts. Innovation depends on freedom to test, iterate, and scale what works, without being constrained by outdated program rules or slow federal processes.

Preparing for the AI-driven economy requires a full-system response. The Departments will prioritize efforts to translate workforce shifts, particularly those driven by AI and other emerging technologies, into coordinated changes across the entire human capital development pipeline, including K-12 education, postsecondary learning, and workforce development. This alignment must be continuous and responsive to national economic priorities, ensuring the full talent system evolves with the economy instead of lagging behind it.

To realize this pillar of the vision, the strategy will expand the use of tools like Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) waivers and authorities that permit state or local governments to consolidate disparate workforce training grants from multiple agencies, invest in outcome-based pilot programs, and redirect flexible funds toward state- and employer-led innovation. The Departments will also explore DARPA-style experimentation models to test bold new ideas, evaluate real results, scale proven strategies, and prioritize AI literacy and skill development across the workforce system.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO CREATE AMERICA'S WORKFORCE VISION

With our challenges defined and a clear vision set by President Trump's mandate for American economic resurgence, it is essential to translate goals into action. The following strategy outlines the specific steps the Trump Administration will take, using existing budgets and authority, to transform our workforce system into an employer-driven engine of prosperity. It also includes several substantial reforms that can be achieved through legislative changes. Each element is designed to deliver measurable results, close skills gaps in critical sectors, and open high-wage career pathways for every American.

PILLAR I: Industry-Driven Strategies: Building reliable talent pipelines through a workforce system led by industry and aligned with America's economic priorities

The Trump Administration has embarked on a government-wide approach to support American industry and incentivize substantial new investments throughout the United States. One of the most significant headwinds facing companies in the United States is identifying, attracting, hiring, and retaining talent. For manufacturers alone, there are close to 500,000 open jobs today—a number expected to quadruple in the coming years. The workforce system must be prepared to serve the needs of the companies whose investments will anchor America's reindustrialization and be a force multiplier for additional workforce investments subsequently made by the companies themselves. It is particularly important to meet the workforce needs of the companies that are seeking to make significant new investments across America, such as the companies working with the Department of Commerce's Investment Accelerator.

Scaling Registered Apprenticeships

The Trump Administration is committed to expanding Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for American workers and has set a bold target of reaching and surpassing 1 million active apprentices. This expansion will be guided by the Executive Order directing the Administration to develop a coordinated federal plan to strengthen and scale Registered Apprenticeships nationwide. The Departments intend to create a plan that will focus on enhancing the employer value proposition for Registered Apprenticeships, deploy federal funding strategically to drive adoption, and support a robust ecosystem of state partners and intermediaries to deliver growth without compromising quality.

To strengthen the employer value proposition for Registered Apprenticeships, the Department of Labor will simplify registration for new apprenticeship programs, reducing the time it takes to develop new program standards or gain approval for expanding apprenticeships to a new occupation. Central to this effort will be supporting the development of high-quality, industry-

approved standards that employers and sponsors can seamlessly choose to adopt off-the-shelf or adapt to the specific needs of their workplace. Harnessing existing public-private partnerships, such as the Manufacturing USA Network, can greatly accelerate the adoption of industry-driven program standards. Maximizing apprenticeship expansion also will depend on revisiting and revising regulatory requirements to align with the Administration's objectives and remove any undue burdens on apprenticeship sponsors. The Department of Labor will address the registration and compliance challenges faced by multi-state employers, industry, and labor organizations so high-quality Registered Apprenticeships can more easily be scaled on a nationwide basis.

To align federal investments with the Registered Apprenticeship expansion goal, the Department of Labor will require applicants for competitively awarded funds to set targets for the number of participants placed into apprenticeships, and those that receive funding will be held accountable for delivering on these commitments. To ensure formula-funded programs also realign towards job-connected learning, the Department of Labor will track the share of participants who are trained through Registered Apprenticeships and incentivize state and local workforce programs to connect more of the Americans they serve to this proven model. Federal investments will target industry-specific strategies to scale apprenticeships in the sectors that are critical to American competitiveness, prioritizing occupations in-demand for companies that engage with the Department of Commerce's Investment Accelerator. The Departments will also explore how other existing federal funding streams might be better leveraged to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships. Pay-for-performance models will be used to provide predictable financial support for employers, while outcomes-based grants to states will reward efforts that grow apprenticeship participation and reduce barriers to expansion.

To support a robust ecosystem for Registered Apprenticeships, the Department of Labor will provide support for state-led efforts that expand system infrastructure and directly grow apprenticeship participation. The Departments will also strengthen the system by supporting high-impact intermediaries, including intermediaries serving as group sponsors for programs involving multiple employers, and joint labor-management partnerships. Additional targeted approaches will be developed to enable greater ecosystem support for small and medium-sized businesses and to expand the use of degree apprenticeships, including identifying appropriate flexibilities that will make these models more viable. Shorter-duration models, including pre-apprenticeships, internships, micro-internships, and other work-based learning models will also be explored as potential on-ramps to Registered Apprenticeships, particularly those that offer structured progression toward employment and demonstrate strong labor market outcomes.

Together, these actions will foster innovation and expansion in the Registered Apprenticeship system, without sacrificing the quality that has been a hallmark of this proven model to provide more opportunities for American workers.