



## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

July 29, 2024

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# Washington Update

## Appropriations

On Tuesday, July 23, House Appropriations Committee ranking member Rosa DeLauro (CT) convened a group of health, education, and labor advocates in the Capitol to denounce the Republicans' Labor-HHS-Education funding bill. House Republicans abandoned plans to vote on the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, as well as several other FY25 funding measures, amid disagreement between conservative hardliners and members in vulnerable seats. After the legislative branch funding measure surprisingly failed in a floor vote earlier this month, GOP leadership opted to start the House's recess early rather than risk another failed floor vote. The House canceled this week's work session — sending lawmakers home for a six-week summer recess with little progress made on their funding bills. The change was partly because of this week's funeral for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), but also comes as Republicans have faced challenges getting several of their remaining bills across the finish line.

On Thursday, July 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to advance four spending bills — Commerce-Science-Justice, Interior-Environment, State-Foreign Operations and Transportation-HUD. Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Patty Murray

(WA) announced the full committee will meet on Thursday, August 1, to consider the five remaining FY25 appropriations bills: Labor-HHS-Education, Energy-Water, Defense, Homeland Security, and Financial Services. Last year was the first time in five years all of the bills made it out of committee, and Murray and Committee ranking Member Susan Collins (ME) are hoping to do it again this year.

## **WIOA Reauthorization**

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee will not mark up Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization legislation before Congress goes on August recess next week. Senate HELP Committee ranking member Bill Cassidy (LA) had hoped to have the legislation marked up before August recess but negotiations on the bill have slowed in recent weeks. Several weeks ago, business groups sent a letter to the committee expressing their opposition to “blacklisting” provisions in the bill that would prevent employers from receiving funding if they violated federal labor laws.

## **USCM LIH: Preparing for the Digital Equity Competitive Grants**

On Tuesday, July 31, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Local Infrastructure Hub (LIH), a major national initiative to assist cities in implementation of President Biden’s \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will hold a webinar designed to highlight and prepare cities to navigate the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) recently announced Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.

**Workforce development organizations are eligible to receive funding through the program.** The \$1.25 billion Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program aims to support community initiatives that ensure everyone has access to the technologies that undergird an increasingly digital economy and the training and skills they need to take advantage of them. Below please find a link to register for the webinar.

Speakers will include Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.; Alan Davidson, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator; Angela Thi Bennett, Director of Digital Equity, National Telecommunications and Information Administration; Amy Huffman, Policy Director, National Digital Inclusion Alliance; and Rachel Stark, Smart Cities Program Manager, City of Charlotte.

[Click here](#) to register for the Local Infrastructure Hub: Preparing for the Digital Equity Competitive Grants webinar.

[Click here](#) to access the LIH website, which includes several tools to help cities access federal infrastructure funding, including a federal grant Opportunity Finder and a Content Calendar for future sessions.

## **EDA Notice of Funding Opportunity**

On Monday, July 29, the Biden-Harris Administration, through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), launched a new phase of funding for the Good Jobs Challenge. This funding opportunity builds on the success of the first round of the Good Jobs Challenge awards, funded by the American Rescue Plan, and this round will invest \$25 million into high-quality, locally-led workforce training programs that lead to good jobs. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) the Department is launching will support sectoral partnerships that bring together diverse stakeholders including employers, labor unions, educational institutions, training organizations, community-based organizations, and others to develop high-quality training programs that lead directly to a good job. EDA anticipates making 5-8 awards ranging from \$1 million to \$8 million, which are anticipated to be announced in winter 2024.

The FY 2024 Good Jobs Challenge NOFO is targeted at jobs that advance industries critical to U.S. economic competitiveness and the competitiveness of the applicant's region, including jobs that do not require a four-year college degree. Applicants must implement training for jobs that advance key technology focus areas as established by the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, which include advanced energy, biotechnology, robotics, and semiconductors. EDA will prioritize applicants that include worker voice through partnerships with labor unions or worker-serving organizations, support for workers at all levels of certification and degree status, and prioritize workers that are adversely impacted by changes in technology.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release and learn more about how to apply.

## **Labor Enforcement to Securely Protect Workers Act**

House Education and the Workforce ranking member Bobby Scott (VA) plans to introduce the "Labor Enforcement to Securely Protect Workers Act," which will increase civil monetary penalties for employers who violate laws related to child labor, minimum wage and overtime, worker safety and farmworker protection standards. Last week, Scott's office requested information from Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su on child labor violations in federally-subsidized youth work programs.

[Click here](#) to access the full text of the bill.

## **Cyber Ready Workforce Act**

On Wednesday, July 24, U.S. Senators Jack Rosen (NV) and Marsha Blackburn (TN) introduced the Cyber Ready Workforce Act, which would support and expand cybersecurity apprenticeships and directs the Department of Labor to award grants in support of the

creation, implementation, and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs in cybersecurity.

[Click here](#) to read the press release on the bill.

## **Workforce Opportunities for Communities in Recovery Act**

On Friday, July 26, Representatives Pramila Jayapal (WA) and Rick Larsen (WA), along with Senator Edward Markey (MA), announced the Workforce Opportunities for Communities in Recovery Act, which would promote employment opportunities for workers in recovery and provide support to communities impacted by widespread substance use. The legislation would codify, strengthen, and expand pilot grant funding for community partnerships that promote employment for those recovering from substance use, help workers transition to occupations that support those affected by substance use, and provide supportive services to program participants, such as substance use treatment, peer support services, and mentorship opportunities.

It would reauthorize, strengthen, and expand a pilot grant program first authorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and later extended through the 2018 Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act. The pilot grants have funded community partnerships that promote employment for individuals affected by substance use and those interested in professions that address the impacts of substance use across the country. The bill would authorize \$187.5 million to continue this life-saving and community-strengthening work.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the bill.

## **Initial Jobless Claims**

In the week ending July 20, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 235,000, a decrease of 10,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 2,000 from 243,000 to 245,000. The 4-week moving average was 235,500, an increase of 250 from the previous week's revised average. The previous week's average was revised up by 500 from 234,750 to 235,250. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 1.2 percent for the week ending July 13, unchanged from the previous week's unrevised rate.

[Click here](#) to access the report.

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# New from DOL/ETA

## **The Good Jobs Summer Tour Comes to Southern Nevada**

Acting Secretary Su and White House Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden visited Workforce Connections in Las Vegas, the Southern Nevada workforce board, for the latest stop on the department's Good Jobs Summer Tour to highlight \$3.6 billion in Investing in America funds supporting good jobs in the region. Following a roundtable discussion moderated by USCM WDC President Jaime Cruz, Executive Director of Workforce Connections, with local workers, employers, unions, educators and elected officials, they joined local leaders in a Good Jobs Principles signing ceremony. They also announced additional investments to support high quality training at community colleges and pre-apprenticeships in high-demand industries.

[Click here](#) to access the Department's threads post highlighting the tour.

[Click here](#) to learn more and see photos from the visit.

[Click here](#) to learn more about The Good Jobs Initiative

## **Department Announces \$99 Million in Available Funding to Deliver Education, Occupational Skills Training, Job Services to Young People**

On Thursday, July 18, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the availability of \$99 million in funding to support the delivery of pre-apprenticeships in high-demand industries including construction, clean energy, healthcare, infrastructure, information technology and hospitality. The YouthBuild Program grants provide academic support, occupational skills training and employment services to young people, ages 16 to 24, in communities where they face persistent barriers to academic and career skills development.

In alignment with the Biden-Harris administration's Investing in America agenda, the program leverages the administration's historic federal investments to help create good jobs and support a range of community needs, such as affordable housing and conservation. The YouthBuild grants will also support the department's Youth Employment Works strategy, which seeks to ensure young people find "no wrong door" when accessing employment and supportive services.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release.

## **Department of Labor Announces Availability of \$65 Million in Grants to Help Community Colleges Improve Access to Affordable, High-Quality Training**

On Thursday, July 18, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the availability of \$65 million in funding to support programs that help community colleges scale affordable, high-quality workforce training that meets employers' and workers' skill development needs in critical industry sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, semiconductors and biotechnology. Acting Secretary Julie Su and White House Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden will officially announce the funding availability in Las Vegas at an event hosted by Workforce Connections, the Southern Nevada workforce board, as part of the department's ongoing Good Jobs Summer Tour.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release.

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## **WDC in the News**

### **Biden-Harris Administration Announces New AmeriCorps Project to Spur Economic Growth and Job Creation in Energy Communities**

On Tuesday, July 23, the Biden-Harris Administration announced Energy Communities AmeriCorps, a new project that will engage 150 full-time AmeriCorps members serving with the VISTA program in advancing locally designed economic development, workforce readiness, and environmental remediation plans in energy communities as they gain skills and experience for good paying clean energy and climate resilience jobs. Building on the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to support coal communities, this innovative public-private partnership will invest nearly \$8 million from federal agencies and philanthropic sources to help ensure a more just and prosperous future for the men and women who fueled our nation's growth.

This new program is part of President Biden's landmark American Climate Corps – a groundbreaking initiative modeled after Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps that will put a new, diverse generation of young Americans to work fighting the impacts of climate change today while gaining the skills they need to join the growing clean energy and climate-resilience workforce of tomorrow.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release.

### **Gen Z Demands More Paths to Career Success. It's Time We Listened.**

As skepticism about the return on investment of a college degree grows among young people, Gen Z is embracing a more diverse spectrum of career pathways. This shift is aided by an ever-widening array of education and training options, from traditional college degrees and certificates to apprenticeships and military service. Learners can now pursue more than one million credentials that open doors to both white-collar careers and well-paying skilled trades.

Many of these routes offer great promise, particularly as employers express a growing desire to hire from non-college pathways. But as research shows, when it comes to choice, more is not necessarily better. From choosing a flavor of jam to picking out a health insurance plan, offering more options alone doesn't yield better outcomes for the consumer. A significant subset of people never sign up for insurance or buy the jam: the choices are simply too overwhelming. When it comes to education and workforce pathways, the solution to choice overload isn't fewer choices, however, but more accurate and clear information.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

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## Reports & Articles

### **New from Department of Commerce**

#### **Department of Commerce and National Science Foundation Partner to Advance Semiconductor Workforce Development**

On Wednesday, July 24, the U.S. National Science Foundation and the CHIPS for America Research and Development Office (CRDO) within the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly invest in a new initiative to train the future semiconductor workforce at all levels for myriad job types across industry and the nation. As a first step, NSF and DOC are jointly issuing a public Request for Information (RFI), seeking input from the community to inform the new initiative.

The memorandum of understanding paves the way for the creation of a National Network for Microelectronics Education – led by a Network Coordination Hub that will oversee a suite of regional consortia and other efforts that offer consistent, rigorous, engaging curricula, instructional materials, experiential opportunities, and more to talent throughout the United States. The Network Coordination Hub will be responsible for coordinating efforts to provide education and training in support of the semiconductor industry across the nation.

Through this non-binding memorandum of understanding, NSF and DOC intend to jointly provide up to \$30 million over the next five years to fund the Network Coordination Hub to work with institutions of higher education, as well as workforce and labor organizations, to

adopt curricula and best practices that are effective and can be scaled; establish a public-facing digital portal to share educational digital resources for learners and educators; execute a communications campaign to raise awareness of careers in the semiconductor industry; and provide technical assistance to educators and trainers in the semiconductor industry.

[Click here](#) to read the full press release.

## **New from U.S. Department of Education**

### **Grant Opportunities to Support Early Learning**

The U.S. Department of Education (Ed) released Notices Inviting Applicants (NIAs) for two grant competitions: the Stronger Connections Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (SCTACB) grant program and the Promise Neighborhoods grant program.

The SCTACB grant program, funded by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), was developed to advance the mental health and well-being of early learners, school-age children and youth, and educators and other school staff by making grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) to provide technical assistance and capacity building to high-need local educational agencies (LEAs). Funded projects will help LEAs establish or expand evidence-based, inclusive practices in several areas including chronic absence, family engagement, and mental health supports. The application deadline is August 26, 2024.

Promise Neighborhoods is a place-based, collective impact approach to improving results for children and families living in the most distressed communities weaving together people, services, and organizations to create a seamless cradle-to-career pipeline along which community members have access to high-quality early care and education, smooth and effective transition to kindergarten, excellent K–12 schools, and pathways to achieve postsecondary and career success. On Tuesday, July 30, from 2:00 - 3:00 pm ET, Promise Neighborhoods staff will host a virtual office hour to answer questions about the 2024 Promise Neighborhoods Early Implementation competition. Applications for the Promise Neighborhoods grant program are due September 10, 2024.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the SCTACB grant program.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Promise Neighborhoods grant program and office hour.

## **New from the Aspen Institute**

### **Workforce Leadership Academy**



The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program (EOP) seeks partners to implement Workforce Leadership Academies in three new cities or regions. Academies bring together leaders from across local workforce ecosystems into a 10-month Fellowship to deepen networks; strengthen systems leadership skills; apply a race, equity, and systems change framework to leaders' work; and deepen understanding of effective strategies and programs. Partners and their cohorts of Fellows will explore and apply skills-based talent development practices to their own organizations and across their workforce ecosystems. Selected partners will receive a challenge grant of \$50,000 toward local academy costs (typically averaging \$160,000 in total financial and in-kind resources) and access to curriculum and administrative resources developed through prior academies. Partners will receive biweekly coaching, meet in monthly virtual facilitator forums, and attend an in-person, intensive three-day retreat before their local academy launch.

[Click here](#) to learn more and for information on how to apply.

## **New from the Brookings**

### **Prime-Age Women are Still Driving the Labor Market Recovery**

The first line of Claudia Goldin's Nobel Lecture notes, "Women are now at the center of the world's economies." Indeed, labor force participation rates for prime-age women in the U.S. have grown significantly over time, and, earlier this year, prime-age women exceeded their highest labor force participation rate ever: Since January 2024, about 78 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 54 have participated in the labor force (figure 1). These prime-age women make up 30 percent of the civilian labor force, relative to 34 percent for prime-age men. And, over the past five years, prime-age women have driven much of the increase in the overall labor force participation rate.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

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## **Fast Fact**

***According to recent research, 40 percent of business leaders consider Gen Z graduates unprepared for the workforce and, of those, 94 percent avoid hiring them.***



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**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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