Appropriations

This week, Congress returns to Washington to start its three-week legislative sprint before August recess. On Monday, July 10, the Senate returned to work while the House will convene Tuesday, July 11. First order of business will be negotiations on the annual spending bills that Congress needs to finalize and pass before the fiscal year ends on September 30. While three months seems long, Congress is set to leave on July 28 and return after Labor Day, so lawmakers will truly have approximately four weeks to put spending cuts in place that were set by President Biden and Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (CA) as part of the debt ceiling deal in May.

Department of Labor

On Monday, July 3, the White House confirmed it has put long-time Democratic adviser Gene Sperling in charge of facilitating labor contract negotiations between the auto workers’ union and Big Three automakers. The White House indicated Sperling will work
closely with Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su on all labor-related issues in the matter. House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx used the appointment of Sterling to criticize and question Su’s abilities in an attempt to dissuade lawmakers from confirming her appointment as Labor Secretary. On Thursday, July 6, Foxx asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to clarify under which legal authority Su is running the Department of Labor, either the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, which puts time limits on officials in an “acting” capacity, or the U.S. code section authorizing the deputy Labor secretary to fill in "until a successor is appointed."

With August recess fast approaching, lawmakers are under pressure to vote on key labor positions, such as Su’s - who still does not have a date scheduled for her full Senate vote four months after Biden nominated her to be Secretary of Labor. The positions of Senators Manchin (WV), Tester (MT), and Sinema (AZ) are still unclear and without the support of at least two of them, Su has no shot. Su has been more active in the media lately, making several TV appearances on Friday, July 7, for Jobs Day.

**National Apprenticeship Act of 2023**

On Monday, July 10, Senators Tammy Baldwin (WI) and Lisa Murkowski (AK) introduced the National Apprenticeship Act of 2023. The bipartisan legislation would modernize and expand apprenticeship programs, specifically for populations not typically involved in apprenticeships, in order to get more people in high-quality, good-paying jobs. It also puts a focus on new high-demand industries, such as advanced manufacturing and renewable energy, and would help employers develop apprenticeship programs in these industries. It would also improve wrap-around services, such as child care, transportation, and housing, to assist individuals in completing their program. Traditionally, wraparound services have been a priority for Democrats and something conservatives tend to see as unnecessary.

[Click here](#) to access the press release and learn more about the legislation.

**House Education and the Workforce Committee**

On Friday, July 7, House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (NC) and Workforce Protections Subcommittee Chairman Kevin Kiley (CA) sent a letter to Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su regarding processing delays of H-2B applications. The Department of Labor (DOL) is required to take first action on applications within seven days, but it has taken 90 days for many applications and the delays are impacting businesses.

[Click here](#) to access the full letter.
Recompete Pilot Programs

The U.S. Economic Development Administration is now accepting applications for its $200 million Recompete Pilot Program. The initiative is designed to make focused investments in communities most in need of economic resources and options so that all communities have a path to economic prosperity. This is predicated on the belief that communities know best what they need to address persistent economic distress. EDA will partner with local communities and make large, flexible investments based on their priorities. This program, authorized through the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, targets areas where prime-age (25-54 years) employment significantly trails the national average, with the goal to close this gap through bottom-up, long-term strategies that tackle a community’s unique economic challenges. EDA will host two informational webinars on Friday, July 7 and Tuesday, July 11, about the Recompete Pilot Program.

This first Recompete Pilot Program NOFO allows applicants to apply for (1) Strategy Development Grants, (2) approval of a Recompete Plan, or (3) both. EDA anticipates awarding approximately $6 million to $12 million in total for Strategy Development Grants and approving at least 20 Recompete Plans at the conclusion of Phase 1. Applicants with approved Recompete Plans will be invited to submit a Phase 2 application. EDA expects to announce Phase 1 winners and release the Phase 2 NOFO in winter 2023. In Phase 2, applicants can apply for larger implementation awards. EDA expects to make approximately 4-8 implementation investments, with awarded regions receiving between $20 million and $50 million on average. The Phase 1 NOFO deadline is Thursday, October 5.

Click here to register for the July 7th at 12:00 pm EDT webinar.

Click here to register for the July 11th at 4:30 pm EDT webinar.

Click here to access the full NOFO.

Click here to access additional resources.

Unemployment Rate

On Friday, July 7, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released the June unemployment report, which showed nonfarm payrolls increased 209,000 last month - the smallest advance since the end of 2020. The unemployment rate fell to 3.6%, a 0.1 percentage point decrease from the previous month. However, Black workers saw their unemployment rate rise to 6% in June from 5.6% in May, making it the second consecutive monthly increase. Within that demographic, unemployment among women ticked higher to 5.4% in June from 5.3% in May. For men, it grew to 5.9% in June, up from 5.6% the month prior.

Click here to access the report.
“Bidenomics” is About Creating Good Jobs and Empowering America’s Workers

When President Biden took office, he made a promise to rebuild our middle class and bring good jobs to communities across the nation – and he delivered. President Biden has proven that an economy that invests in and prioritizes growth and opportunities for workers is not only possible, it’s essential. President Biden’s economic agenda, coupled with game-changing investments, places its faith in America’s workers to build roads, repair bridges, strengthen our ports, expand reliable, affordable broadband, deliver clean drinking water and pave the way to a clean energy future – all while creating good paying jobs in communities across the nation.

Click here to read the full blog article.

Department of Labor Welcomes Four Organizations to Pilot Program that Delivers Employment Services to Transitioning Service Members, Spouses

On Wednesday, July 5, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that its Veterans’ Employment and Training Service has added four organizations to support its Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot, which provides personalized employment assistance to transitioning service members and their spouses at select military installations worldwide. The organizations include Indeed Inc. in Stamford, Connecticut, one of the world’s largest employment website operators; Aston Carter Inc. in Hanover, Maryland, a global professional staffing provider; the North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund in Millbury, Massachusetts; and the Hampton Roads Workforce Council in Norfolk, Virginia. The organizations each signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with VETS, joining 44 non-government partner organizations and two government partners currently supporting the pilot.

The Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot expands classroom instruction in the department’s Transition Assistance Program by connecting transitioning service members and their spouses with partner organizations for additional employment services based on their individual needs to help them before and after separation. The four organizations will provide apprenticeship opportunities, digital matching of skills and experiences, placement services and wrap-around services for additional support services.

Click here to access the full press release.
Department Awards $11.7 Million to Help Organizations Prepare Young People for the Workforce in Underserved Communities

On Thursday, June 29, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the award of $11.7 million in grants to three organizations to support programs that help youth and young adults in communities affected by violence and poverty to prepare for career success in the labor market. Administered by the department’s Employment and Training Administration, these Growth Opportunities Intermediary grants focus on teenagers from 15 to 18 years old and young adults from 18 to 24 years old who are affected by community violence and poverty. Funding supports local organizations that provide occupational training and jobs to prepare these young people for workplace success. The grants will also help the organizations offer supportive services, including leadership development, mentoring and conflict-resolution skills. Through these grants, recipients will replicate best practices and offer administrative and fiscal support or management to help grantees provide equitable access to foundational skills and job opportunities for young people in underserved communities.

Click here to read the full press release.

Seeking Apprenticeship Expertise

Know anyone passionate about expanding and improving Registered Apprenticeships? The U.S. Department of Labor is accepting nominations for the National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship until July 30, 2023.

Click here to learn more about the nomination process.

Upcoming Meetings

September 28-29, 2023 (Thursday, Friday): WDC Board Meeting & 34th Annual Congressional Forum - Washington, DC
(All USCM Workforce Development Council Members Invited)

WDC in the News

Workforce Development Woven Throughout EDA Investments

A strong workforce is foundational in growing the nation’s economy. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is proud to partner with communities and stakeholders
The Culture Navigating July 2022

The Resurgence of Start-ups

The Democratic Agenda Through Compact

During the pandemic, employees were forced to negotiate in unchartered territory. The Great Resignation of 2021 saw a growth spurt in business start-ups. Quiet quitting dominated 2022. And in 2023, we'll likely see a resurgence of career paths in the workplace as employers scramble to retain happy employees. Employer-based career paths create an environment where ambition and hard work are rewarded with promotions and career advancement. It lists steps to take to progress into more advanced roles within the company. Developing in-house career paths lets employees know they’re valued and will advance in their career without having to job hop. Even with a certain amount of uncertainty entering 2023, job seekers should take advantage of low unemployment rates early in the year. Translation: don’t wait! Join the
CLEVERsation to learn how you can take action to cultivate workers’ desired outcomes in the workplace.

Click here to register for the webinar.

**High Turnover is Disrupting Efforts to Fix the Workforce Crisis, A Survey Finds**

While state and local governments are making some progress in addressing workforce shortages, high turnover is complicating their efforts, according to a survey of human resources managers. About 45% of the 249 managers polled in MissionSquare Research Institute’s annual survey said they are seeing more people quit this year than last year. But slightly more than half reported that they are making progress in restoring their workforces to pre-pandemic levels. That’s better than last year’s survey when only about a third said the size of their workforces had grown.

“We’re seeing really good numbers in terms of hiring,” Gerald Young, senior research analyst with the institute, said during an online conversation at the GovExec State and Local Government Tech Summit on Monday. “As the pandemic initially hit, hiring was somewhat put on pause. [But this year] lots of organizations are either bringing people in or attempting to bring people in.” Most of the respondents to the survey, which was released Thursday, are from local governments. And while they’re making progress, the fact that so many are seeing resignations increase is complicating their efforts to address workforce shortages because in many cases governments are having trouble replacing workers.

Click here to read the full article.

**Your City Could Get Millions to Create Jobs Under a New Biden Plan to Put Americans Back to Work**

The Biden administration wants to help inject life back into parts of the US that are struggling to attract enough jobs. Starting June 29, communities can apply for $200 million in funding, the first tranche of $1 billion that will roll out over the next five years. It’s called the Recompete Pilot Program, and it’s meant to pump funds into economically distressed areas. Those are regions that, according to the Economic Development Administration, have gaping prime age employment gaps — meaning that employment among 25- to 54-year-olds lags behind the national average, leaving one of the workforce's most important demographics behind. For instance, all indigenous tribal lands are eligible, as are cities like Scranton, Pennsylvania; EDA has created a comprehensive map of eligibility.

"This funding will deliver on President Biden’s commitment to making sure every worker and every community have a fair shot to realize their full economic potential," Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said in a statement to Insider, adding that it is a not

"one-size-fits-all program."


Improving Workforce Development and STEM Education

On Thursday, July 27, from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. EDT Brookings is hosting the hybrid event “Improving Workforce Development and STEM Education.” America needs more workers to staff its technology sector, provide STEM expertise, and expand the digital economy. Right now, there are shortages in many technical areas, limiting the country’s ability to remain competitive and preserve the innovation edge that is crucial to future prosperity.

On July 27, as part of the twelfth annual John Hazen White Forum on Public Policy, Governance Studies at Brookings will host a panel discussion to explore how the United States can improve workforce development and enhance STEM expertise. Experts will discuss ideas for boosting education and prioritizing lifelong learning. This forum convenes leaders from academia, business, and government to discuss and identify solutions to the United States’ most pressing challenges.

Click here to attend the event in person.

Click here to register to watch the event via webcast.

Crypto Crashes and Job Slashes: Lessons for Local Leaders on Building an Innovation Ecosystem

As recently as last year, it seemed that everyone was talking about cryptocurrencies - from celebrities and athletes to news anchors and investors. Even elected officials were getting in on the action, as local governments turned to cryptocurrencies as a solution to job growth, income inequality, and more. But today, the crypto hype cycle is over (although bitcoin has seen gains in recent days). After a major crash in the crypto industry, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists have moved on to generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as those that power ChatGPT and other systems. Which raises the questions: What’s the status of the crypto craze as the new AI systems dominate the headlines? Where has crypto-related job and startup growth recovered after the recent crash, and where hasn’t it? And what lessons can state and local officials take away to prepare themselves for the next big tech opportunity?
Fast Fact

According to new research, the average employee is productive for 2 hours and 53 minutes a day. That’s only 31% of the average 8-hour workday. Most employees feel unproductive because they spend the majority of their workday distracted.

THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL