

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Strengthening Cities Through
Workforce Development



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

August 10, 2026



Washington Update

Appropriations

On Saturday, August 8, the Senate passed a bipartisan continuing resolution on a vote of 90-6 to fund the federal government through December 11. The Senate moved quickly on the legislation as part of an agreement allowing lawmakers to leave for August recess. The Senate proposal would extend current FY26 funding levels and differs from the House-passed version by providing funding through a later date and including provisions that would maintain current federal grant administration policies during the duration of the CR. The provision would maintain current federal grant administration policies through December 11, setting up a potential dispute when the CR expires. The measure also includes language sought by Democrats to prevent U.S. Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement from receiving new funding, while maintaining their existing funding levels.

The CR would provide targeted funding adjustments and extend several programs and authorities, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, housing assistance programs, surface transportation programs, veterans' programs, cybersecurity authorities, and other expiring federal programs. The legislation would also allow agencies to continue certain operations, avoid disruptions to federal services, and address specific funding needs identified during the appropriations process.

The Senate bill now sets up negotiations with the House, which passed its own bill which would fund the government through December 4. House members will need to consider whether to accept the Senate version or pursue their own approach when lawmakers return in

September, with differences over grant administration provisions and the restriction on new funding for ICE and Border Patrol potentially complicating their consideration.

The White House issued a statement supporting the Senate-passed bill, including its funding adjustments and extensions. However, some House Republicans have raised concerns about the Senate measure, while lawmakers in both parties have expressed opposition to the administration's proposed changes to the federal grant approval process.

[Click here](#) to access the Senate CR.

Farm Bill

On Thursday, August 6, the Senate Agriculture Committee did not advance a Republican-led farm bill after members voted 10-11 on the legislation, leaving the future of the broader agriculture and nutrition authorization package uncertain. The vote followed disagreements over proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including a provision that would require states to assume a larger share of SNAP benefit costs. Committee members will have the opportunity to revisit the legislation when the panel reconvenes in September. Committee Chairman John Boozman (AR) made revisions to the bill in an effort to address concerns raised by members, including a proposal to delay implementation of the SNAP cost-sharing requirement. However, the committee was unable to reach agreement on the measure. The farm bill, which sets policy and funding priorities for agriculture, nutrition, and related programs, will remain pending as lawmakers continue negotiations.

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

Head Start

On Thursday, August 6, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services unveiled a proposed new rule, "Reducing Federal Burden for Head Start Programs," that would make changes to federal Head Start program requirements and provide additional flexibility to approximately 1,600 Head Start programs nationwide. The Trump Administration stated that the changes are intended to reduce regulatory burdens, expand program capacity, and allow providers to serve an estimated 236,000 additional children while reducing costs. The updated requirements apply to Head Start programs that provide early education, health, and nutrition services to low-income children and families. The announcement has drawn concerns from some lawmakers regarding potential impacts on health and safety standards and services for children with disabilities. The proposed rule is open for public comment for 60 days.

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

Workforce Recovery and Resilience Act

On Wednesday, August 5, Senators Dave McCormick (PA) and John Fetterman (PA) introduced the bipartisan Workforce Recovery and Resilience Act, which would expand workforce development tools to help communities address workforce shortages tied to substance abuse disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services. The bill would amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to provide state and local workforce boards with additional resources to develop and strengthen the workforce needed to respond to the opioid and fentanyl crisis.

The legislation would direct the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to identify and share evidence-based workforce strategies for communities responding to substance use disorders and expand the use of National Dislocated Worker grants for employment and training activities related to addiction prevention, treatment, mental health care, and pain management. It would also broaden grant eligibility to include dislocated workers, long-term unemployed individuals, individuals affected by widespread substance use in their communities, and individuals working or seeking employment in healthcare fields related to substance use disorder services.

The legislation follows ongoing efforts to address workforce shortages in behavioral health and recovery services, and is intended to provide communities with additional workforce development resources to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. Companion legislation was introduced in the House by Representatives Ryan Mackenzie (PA) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL).

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

AI Tax and Work Protection Act

On Thursday, August 6, Representatives Greg Casar (TX), Valerie Foushee (NC), and Sara Jacobs (CA) introduced the AI Tax and Work Protection Act, which would establish a tax on certain artificial intelligence (AI) companies to fund a new federal workforce program designed to support workers affected by AI-driven job displacement. The legislation would require qualifying AI developers to pay a tax based on either the price of AI tokens sold or revenue generated from AI products, whichever is greater, with the tax rate increasing during periods of higher unemployment. Revenue would be used to establish a new Work Protection Administration to provide employment assistance and workforce support.

The bill reflects ongoing congressional interest in addressing the workforce impacts of AI and follows other recent proposals to tax AI companies or direct AI-related revenues toward public investments. The legislation, introduced by Democratic lawmakers, would require additional bipartisan support to advance in Congress.

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

Senate Confirmations

On Friday, August 7, the Senate confirmed several of President Trump's nominees to key economic and labor positions, including the Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, senior Treasury officials, and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The Senate approved a package of several dozen executive branch nominees on a 51-47 vote, largely along party lines.

Christopher Phelan was confirmed as Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, along with Francis Brooke as Deputy Treasury Secretary, Erin Browne as Undersecretary for International Affairs, Sriprakash Kothari as Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, and Hunter McMaster as Assistant Secretary for Financial Markets. The Senate also confirmed John Hurley as the U.S. representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and John Crews to the board of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

Brett Matsumoto, a longtime career federal official, was confirmed as Commissioner of Labor Statistics. The BLS continues to face scrutiny over the production and reliability of federal employment data. He is the first Senate-confirmed BLS commissioner since former Commissioner Erika McEntarfer was dismissed by President Trump in August 2025.

Unemployment Rate

On Friday, August 7, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released the July unemployment report, showing that nonfarm payrolls employment declined by 23,000 jobs, while the unemployment rate edged down from 4.2 to 4.1 percent. The report reflected a weaker-than-expected labor market, with payroll growth in recent months revised downward and overall hiring showing signs of slowing. The labor force participation rate declined to 61.4 percent, reflecting a decrease in the number of individuals participating in the labor market. Average hourly earnings increased 3.2 percent over the past year, indicating continued wage growth but at a slower pace.

Last month's report follows several months of more moderate employment growth and points to continued cooling in labor market conditions. While unemployment remained relatively low, the slowdown in job creation and downward revisions to prior employment estimates may influence future Federal Reserve decisions regarding interest rates.

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

[Click here](#) to access Acting Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling's statement on the jobs report.



Initial Jobless Claims

In the week ending August 1, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 199,000, an increase of 1,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 197,000 to 198,000. The 4-week moving average was 198,750, a decrease of 4,500 from the previous week's revised average.

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



Job Opening

The Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio (WCSO) is seeking an experienced and motivated Compliance & Procurement Manager to join its team. The position plays a critical role in ensuring organizational accountability, regulatory compliance, effective procurement practices, contract administration, policy development, and continuous improvement across their workforce development initiatives. Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the Compliance & Procurement Manager will oversee competitive procurements, support monitoring activities, and promote transparency and stewardship of public funds.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the position and how to apply.

New Home Repair Academy Creates Paid Pathways to Skilled Trades Careers While Supporting Mayor Parker's H.O.M.E. Initiative

On Monday, August 3, the City of Philadelphia announced the launch of the Home Repair Academy, a workforce development program that directly supports Mayor Cherelle L. Parker's Housing Opportunities Made Easy (H.O.M.E.) Initiative, making historic investments in housing production and preservation across Philadelphia. This new workforce development program pays participants, prepares them for careers in the skilled trades, and expands the workforce needed to preserve the city's historic rowhomes.

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

Mayor Brett Smiley Announces Providence Cradle-to-Career Education Strategy Plan

Providence (RI) Mayor Brett P. Smiley was joined by Superintendent of Providence Public Schools Javier Montañez, Community College of Rhode Island President Rosemary Costigan A. Ph.D., RN, President & CEO of Children's Friend David Caprio, Executive Director of the Providence Foundation David Salvatore, Executive Director of City Year Rhode Island Nirva LaFortune and Executive Director of Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center Khadija Lewis Khan to unveil the Providence Cradle-to-Career Strategy. This initiative is a coordinated approach to ensure every Providence child has access to the opportunities and individualized support needed to succeed from early childhood through graduation and into careers.

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

Becoming More Agile in the Age of AI

Community colleges must become more nimble in reading and reacting to workforce trends as artificial intelligence accelerates changes in the labor market, according to a new report from Harvard University's Project on Workforce and Education Design Lab. The report argues that colleges need faster, more sophisticated ways to gather and act on information that connects learners to employers' evolving needs.

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

Apprenticeship Intermediaries Survey

On Apprenticeships for America (AFA) and Education Northwest (EDNW) are conducting this survey to learn more about organizations that serve as apprenticeship intermediaries across the United States. The survey asks about your organization's role in apprenticeship, the services you provide, funding and capacity, outcomes, challenges, and future priorities. Your responses will help create the inaugural Apprenticeship Intermediaries Field Report, providing the first national overview of apprenticeship intermediaries and informing future research, policy, and practice. Apprenticeship intermediaries can include many different types of organizations, including community-based organizations, workforce development boards, education and training providers, industry or labor organizations, nonprofits, for-profit organizations, and government agencies.

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



New from U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education Approves Nation's First Workforce Pell Grant Program in Iowa

On Tuesday, August 4, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) approved the nation's first Workforce Pell Grant program, marking a major milestone in expanding faster, more affordable pathways to careers in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Starting today, eligible students at Iowa Central Community College can now use federal Pell Grant dollars to enroll in the Emergency Medical Technician program, a 14-week program that prepares students for key public safety jobs.

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

New from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Convenes Roundtable Focused on Strengthening the Water Sector Workforce

On Tuesday, August 4, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) convened a roundtable on water workforce to discuss how to help recruit and retain individuals into meaningful careers in water and to identify opportunities where EPA can help reduce barriers and improve interstate coordination. EPA's Office of Water was joined by water systems, water associations, states, and other partners to engage in proactive discussions about how to address a potential widespread shortage of qualified workers due to anticipated retirements.

[Click here](#) to access the full press release on the event.

New from MDRC

Supporting Women Leaving Jail or Prison: A Process Study of Los Angeles' POWR Program

Women's incarceration rates have grown substantially since 2000, but there are still few programs for women reentering the community after incarceration. And they do need such programs, because their needs are often different from those of men leaving incarceration.

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



Fact of the Week

According to the recent FlexJobs' 2026 Women & Men at Work report, salary remains an important consideration across the workforce, but women are significantly more likely than men to factor workplace flexibility — including remote work, flexible schedules and work/life balance — into their employment decisions.

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



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