

## WIOA Reauthorization Bill Passes House, USCM Action Alert Goes to Mayors



### WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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## Washington Update

### WIOA Reauthorization — A Stronger Workforce for America Act

On Tuesday, April 9, the House passed the bipartisan legislation A Stronger Workforce for America Act (ASWA - HR 6655), which reauthorizes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The bill passed on a vote of 378-26 with 26 Republicans voting against it and all Democrats voting in favor. The legislation's future in the Senate is still unclear, as top Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee members have other legislative priorities to tackle. House Education and the Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (NC) is hopeful that the House's strong bipartisan support for the bill will put pressure on the Senate to move on reauthorization.

On Friday, April 12, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran highlighted the passage of ASWA in his weekly newsletter, alerting mayors and city staff to our concerns in the legislation. He also outlined USCM's Senate advocacy campaign, which will be led by USCM Jobs, Education, and the Workforce Standing Committee Chair Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego, that will soon kick off with a mayors' sign on letter, and focus on removing provisions in the bill opposed by USCM.

[Click here](#) for a fact sheet on ASWA.

[Click here](#) for bill text.

[Click here](#) for a bill summary.

[Click here](#) for a section-by-section summary.

[Click here](#) to access Tom Cochran's Action Alert on ASWA/WIOA Reauthorization.

[Click here](#) for the USCM ASWA concerns letter.

## **Appropriations**

On Wednesday, April 10, the House Republican conference officially voted to ratify the GOP Steering panel's recommendation that Congressman Tom Cole (OK) be the next chair of the lower chamber's Appropriations Committee. Cole shared that his immediate next steps will include shoring up staff and working through a reshuffling of the subcommittee chairs, since he will be giving up his Transportation-HUD position. He will also abdicate his chairmanship of the Rules Committee, with Congressman Michael Burgess (TX) set to succeed him. This week Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (WA) said she expects FY25 funding negotiations to be even more difficult than those for FY24 — noting funding caps will increase by just 1 percent for defense and non-defense programs, as set in the 2023 debt limit deal.

## **House Oversight and Accountability Committee**

On Wednesday, April 10, the House Oversight and Accountability Committee unanimously advanced the bipartisan bill Allowing Contractors to Choose Employees for Select Skills Act (ACCESS Act, HR 7887), which would remove degree requirements and barriers for skilled job applicants who gained their expertise at a community college, apprenticeship or other skills training program. The legislation, introduced by Congresswoman Nancy Mace (SC) and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL), tasks the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with developing guidance for implementation, including instructions that agencies must make distinct justifications for each contract solicitation, and an encouragement to explore how alternative qualifications (such as industry certifications and work-based learning programs) could stand in for a four-year degree. Committee ranking member Jamie Raskin (MD) said he hopes to amend the bill before its floor debate to find carve-outs for some types of positions that still need a college degree, such as engineering and other technical fields. The bill will now go to the floor for consideration by the full House.

[Click here](#) to read a press release and access the full text of the bill.

## Senate Joint Economic Committee Hearing

On Wednesday, April 10, the Senate Joint Economic Committee held the hearing “Building Blocks for Success: Investing in Early Childhood Education” to stress support for increased federal early childhood education funds. A new brief released by the committee highlights the economic impact of early learning, touting the Child Tax Credit, Head Start, Child Care and Development Block Grant and other federal programs as early learning funding streams that lead to economic benefits. Additionally, the brief says federal investments in early childhood education are necessary to help families access affordable early learning programs that, in turn, allow families to pay for necessities and contribute to their retirement savings. It also advocates for salary increases for Pre-K teachers and child care workers.

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

## Department of Labor Overtime Rule

On Wednesday, April 10, the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) announced that it has finished its reviews of the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) proposed expansion of overtime pay requirements, as well as stricter rules on certain retirement investment advice. Typically, OIRA clearance is the final step before regulations are publicly announced. The Administration is on a tight deadline to complete key rules so they will not be overturned by the Congressional Review Act (CRA) if Republicans regain control after November’s elections. According to experts on the CRA, regulations finalized this past May could be subject to the law’s ‘lookback period,’ which is designed to prevent presidents from pushing through controversial policies toward the end of their term.

In August, the Department proposed raising the threshold for time-and-a-half overtime pay so workers earning up to around \$55,000 annually would qualify, compared to the \$35,568 set during the Trump administration. Separately, DOL is seeking to increase protections for retirement savers by imposing fiduciary obligations on certain types of investment products, such as 401(k) rollovers and fixed annuities. It is still unclear when the two rules will be unveiled.

## Joint Employer Rule

On Wednesday, April 10, the U.S. Senate approved a proposal to repeal the National Labor Relations (NLRB) ‘joint employer’ rule, which would treat companies as the employers of many of their contract and franchise workers and require them to bargain with those workers’ unions. The Senate passed the resolution in a 50-48 vote with Democratic Senator Joe Manchin (WV) and independent senators Angus King (ME) and Kyrsten Sinema (AZ) all voting in favor. The resolution, which passed the House in January, was introduced under the Congressional Review Act which allows Congress to repeal agency

rules through a majority vote in both houses. President Biden is expected to veto the resolution repealing the rule. A two-thirds majority would be required to overcome a veto.

## **Initial Jobless Claims**

In the week ending April 6, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 211,000, a decrease of 11,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 221,000 to 222,000. The 4-week moving average was 214,250, a decrease of 250 from the previous week's revised average. The previous week's average was revised up by 250 from 214,250 to 214,500. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 1.2 percent for the week ending March 30, unchanged from the previous week's unrevised rate.

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

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# **New from DOL/ETA**

## **Department of Labor Announces \$19 Million in Grants Available to Improve Job Opportunities for Older Low-Income Adult Workers**

On Wednesday, April 10, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the availability of about \$19 million in grants for current national recipients in the Senior Community Service Employment Program to apply for additional funding in a demonstration of sector-based training for older workers. The department's Employment and Training Administration will award up to six demonstration grants, ranging from \$2 to \$5 million each, to current grantees operating programs awarded under the 2020 SCSEP national grant competition. To receive an optional demonstration grant, entities must also be awarded funding through the 2024 SCSEP national grant competition that the department announced March 7, 2024. The demonstration projects will allow grantees to augment the SCSEP service model to provide a combination of enhanced career navigation services, occupational training and on-the-job training. Successful applicants will build and expand partnerships with employers, training providers and the public workforce system to inform and support the projects. In turn, the department will study the effect of industry-based or sector-based training on employment outcomes for older workers. It will then use the data to support its evidence-building agenda and help develop strategies related to training and employment programs for older workers.

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

## **Department of Labor Announces \$6 Million in Grants to Attract, Retain Women in Registered Apprenticeships, Nontraditional Occupations**

On Thursday, April 11, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced a funding opportunity of \$6 million for up to 17 grants to attract and keep women in Registered Apprenticeship programs and industries where they are underrepresented, including manufacturing, construction and cybersecurity. Administered jointly by the department's Women's Bureau and Employment and Training Administration, the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Grant Program supports community-based organizations in their efforts to recruit, train and retain more women in Registered Apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.

Women make up nearly half the U.S. labor force but only about 14 percent of all Registered Apprenticeships, a proven pathway to good-paying, family-sustaining jobs and a pipeline for employers to recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce. The WANTO grants will help address the significant underrepresentation of women in Registered Apprenticeships in skilled trades such as construction and in emerging, high-growth industries such as manufacturing, infrastructure, cybersecurity and healthcare.

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

## **Department of Labor Announces \$1 Million in Grants to Prevent, Address Workplace Gender-Based Violence, Harassment**

On Thursday, April 11, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the availability of \$1 million in funding to support up to four grants to protect underserved and marginalized women workers from gender-based violence and harassment and to respond when it occurs. Administered jointly by the department's Women's Bureau and the Employment and Training Administration, the Fostering Access, Rights and Equity Grant Program helps survivors and women at high risk for workplace violence and harassment. FARE grants fund community organizations' efforts to improve job quality through projects that address harmful workplace norms and employ strategies to prevent and reduce gender-based violence and harassment. Workplace violence and harassment harms women from underserved and historically marginalized communities disproportionately. These communities include women of color, LGBTQI+ people, women with disabilities and women affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

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

## **Department of Labor Awards \$65 Million in Strengthening Community Colleges Grants to Expand Access to Training, Skill Development for In-Demand Industries**

On Wednesday, April 10, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the award of \$65 million in grants to 16 colleges in 14 states to expand their capacity to provide training to meet the skill development needs of employers and help students obtain good jobs. Administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration, the fourth round of Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants will support individual community colleges, as well as consortia of colleges, to prepare students for jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and offer career development opportunities based on the Good Jobs Principles developed by the departments of Labor and Commerce in 2022. Grantees will work with industry stakeholders to identify the workforce needs of multiple employers within a selected industry in the labor market area.

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

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## WDC in the News

### **Charlotte City Council Approves \$3.6 Million in Workforce Development Grants**

In a unanimous vote, city council approved \$3.6 million in grant funds aimed at supporting workforce development initiatives. This decision marks a sizable investment in the city's future and underscores a commitment to empowering its residents and businesses. "We are thrilled to announce the approval of these substantial grant funds for workforce development," said Mayor Vi Lyles. "Workforce development is a strategic priority for this council, and this investment reflects our dedication to creating a vibrant and inclusive economy where all residents have the opportunity to thrive." The grants will be distributed to a diverse range of organizations dedicated to providing training programs, career navigation services and supportive services to job seekers in Charlotte. These funds will directly benefit over 500 individuals seeking to improve their employability, as well as businesses looking to strengthen their workforce.

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

### **Business Roundtable Workforce Chair Urges Passage of WIOA Modernization Bill**

Ahead of House consideration of H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act, Scott Kirby, Chief Executive Officer of United Airlines and Business Roundtable Education and Workforce Committee Chair, sent a letter to Members of Congress urging passage. In the letter, Kirby outlined the benefits of modernizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

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

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## Reports & Articles

### New from Brookings

#### **Career and Technical Education is a Hidden Weak Spot in Many High Schools' Teacher Workforces**

Schools across the country face teacher shortages in a range of areas, including Career and Technical Education (CTE), which prepares students for postsecondary education and careers. National data shows that administrators report having difficulty filling positions in CTE subjects 57% of the time, compared to only 39% for openings in academic subjects. These reports of difficulty retaining CTE teachers are similar to how administrators report shortages in other hard-to-staff positions like special education. Shortages are particularly pressing in high-demand, high-wage subjects in which teachers may face higher opportunity costs to teach. A report from the National Association of State Directors of CTE describes teacher shortages in manufacturing (81% of surveyed state CTE directors reported shortages), IT (73%), health sciences (71%), and STEM CTE.

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

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## Fast Fact

***The average worker gets 121 emails per day and sends nearly 40 of their own.***



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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