

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Strengthening Cities Through
Workforce Development



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

November 3, 2025



Appropriations

On Saturday, November 1, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for roughly 42 million people expired, while the Senate adjourned for the weekend on day 30 of the government shutdown. Without a funding agreement, the shutdown will become the longest in U.S. history on Wednesday, November 5 — surpassing the previous record of 35-days in 2018-2019. The Senate will reconvene this afternoon and is not currently scheduled to vote on the House-passed measure to fund the government. Bipartisan discussions have resumed, including consideration of a three-bill appropriations package for Agriculture-FDA, Military Construction-VA, and the Legislative Branch as part of a potential agreement. Advancing this package could help break the stalemate and would fund SNAP through September.

Today the Trump administration told a federal judge that it would not tap additional funds to ensure that SNAP beneficiaries continue to receive full benefits in November, indicating that Americans who receive food stamps will only get partial payments from the federal government this month. What remains unclear is when recipients might actually receive their assistance, as the Trump administration has previously acknowledged in court that substantial delays in providing even partial benefits during the shutdown was a possibility.

On Friday, October 31, two federal judges had ruled that the federal government must use contingency funds to continue SNAP payments during the shutdown. In Rhode Island, U.S. District Judge John McConnell ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to distribute SNAP benefits as soon as possible, first using the \$6 billion contingency fund and, if necessary, additional funding sources to maintain full benefits. The Administration had a noon deadline

today to update the county on the status of the SNAP distributions. In a separate ruling in Massachusetts, U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani found the planned suspension of benefits unlawful but requested additional briefing before issuing a final directive. She instructed the administration to report back by today, on whether at least reduced November benefits would be authorized. President Trump indicated he was asking for clarification from the court on funding SNAP during the shutdown. The lapse could also affect local grocery stores, which may reduce stock or employee hours. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides nutrition support, formula, and breastfeeding assistance to low-income families, is also facing funding shortages. Some states have secured enough funds to continue benefits, while others may implement waitlists or temporarily halt aid.

President Trump continues to urge GOP Senators to eliminate the filibuster, which would eliminate the 60-vote threshold and allow Republicans to advance legislation to reopen the federal government without bipartisan support. Some senators signaled that the government shutdown could end this week, citing potential shifts in negotiating positions. Republicans suggested Democrats may be more willing to reach an agreement after Tuesday's elections, while Democrats pointed to rising health insurance premiums visible at the start of Affordable Care Act open enrollment as increasing pressure on Republicans to negotiate on health care provisions.

The Senate's scheduled recess next week, combined with President Trump's return to Washington after a week of international travel, is seen as increasing the likelihood of progress toward a resolution this week.

U.S. Department of Labor

On Friday, October 31, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) released a new contingency plan recalling 255 furloughed workers as the government shutdown nears its second month. The plan calls for Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) staff to resume processing prevailing wage determinations and labor certification applications, while 200 additional employees are designated as essential for activities required by law at the Employment and Training Administration. An additional 55 workers in the Wage and Hour Division are funded through a resource separate from annual appropriations.

OFLC approvals are required before employers can file visa petitions with the Department of Homeland Security or obtain visas through the Department of State. The suspension of OFLC operations had created significant challenges for agricultural employers relying on the H-2A seasonal visa program. The National Council of Agricultural Employers had requested that H-2A labor certifications be deemed essential, warning that delays could threaten the peak harvest season.

The plan also allows for limited exceptions for Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) staff to produce and release the consumer price index, which is used to set Social Security cost-of-living adjustments for 2026. Other key economic data — including reports on wage growth, job openings, and import prices — remain postponed, raising concerns among Federal Reserve officials and business leaders. Payroll processor ADP has begun publishing weekly job estimates to partially fill the gap, though it is unclear if these will fully substitute for official BLS reports. Extended shutdowns could further delay releases or affect data quality.

Separately, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recalled three staff members, including newly appointed Commissioner Brittany Panuccio.

[Click here](#) to access the DOL's contingency plan.



U.S. Department of Labor Resumes Processing of LCAs and H-1B and PERM Applications

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has resumed processing employer requests for prevailing wages and labor certification determinations for temporary and permanent employment. The Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) confirmed that its Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG) system is operational, allowing employers to file new applications and track pending cases.

Operations were temporarily halted due to a federal funding lapse and government shutdown. During this period, the FLAG portal and SeasonalJobs registry were offline, pausing Labor Condition Application filings, prevailing wage requests, and PERM applications. The department noted the interruption was caused by the funding lapse, not modernization efforts. Employers may now resume filing LCAs for H-1B petitions and PERM certifications. OFLC warned that backlogs may slow processing, with some applications filed as early as March 2024 still pending. Stakeholders are advised to allow extra time for adjudications and to monitor the OFLC website for updates.

[Click here](#) to access the OFLC announcement.



How a Better Framework is Helping Illinois Improve Workforce Development

Illinois is on a mission to process people through the state's unemployment insurance program and link them with jobs more quickly and efficiently. To do that, improving the state's

approach to administrative and labor market data is the first step. The Illinois Department of Employment Security is leveraging an enhanced data environment developed by the nonprofit Coleridge Initiative, which gives state leaders a closer look into employment and labor trends based on unemployment insurance claims data across Illinois.

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

The Future Workforce Can't Wait: Why States Must Redefine Student Success Now

With another school year underway, educators, families and policymakers are rightly focused on student success. But the recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results — which showed the lowest 12th-grade scores in math and reading in two decades — sent a clear signal: the traditional definition of “success” is out of sync with the demands of today’s economy. The acceleration of artificial intelligence in classrooms and workplaces makes that disconnect even more urgent.

AI and automation are transforming every industry, reducing demand for routine tasks and raising the bar for human skills. Employers across sectors — from software firms to construction sites — report they can’t find talent with the right mix of skills, commitment and adaptability to meet evolving workforce needs.

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

CyberCorps Talent Pipeline Buckles Under Trump Hiring Freezes

Every January, an exclusive career fair in Washington, D.C. marks a pivotal moment for CyberCorps scholars. Hundreds of top students from across the country meet with dozens of federal agencies looking to hire talent at the event, which is required attendance for recipients.

Established in 2000, the CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service program provides college tuition and a stipend to awardees, who, in return, commit to working in a government cybersecurity role upon graduation. It’s backed by the Office of Personnel Management and National Science Foundation, the latter of which awards scholarships for up to three years of support for cybersecurity undergraduate and graduate participants, including PhD candidates.

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



New from National Skills Coalition

Big Insights from Small and Mid-Sized Businesses

Across the nation, we are seeing more investments in skills-based hiring and quality non-degree credentials. This includes the passage of Workforce Pell, which National Skills Coalition, Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships (BLU), and its partners long advocated for. Policymakers and skills advocates are working to ensure that these efforts lead to strong outcomes, but the business perspective is often overlooked. To fill a gap in existing research, Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships (BLU) interviewed 75 small to medium-sized businesses across the manufacturing and construction industries.

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

New from Center for American Progress

Fact Sheet: Expanding the Public Safety Workforce

Localities nationwide experience a range of public safety challenges depending on community dynamics, people's circumstances, and available resources. Police, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians work tirelessly to respond to calls for service and support community members through an emergency. However, a wide range of community concerns fall outside the core responsibilities and training of these traditional first responders.

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



Fact of the Week

According to a recent Deloitte survey, only 6% of U.S. Gen Z and Millennials say their primary career goal is to reach a leadership position. Instead, younger workers prioritize learning and development, financial security, meaningful work, and well-being. Among Gen Z, 70% report developing skills to advance their careers at least weekly, and 67% are building skills outside of work hours, showing ambition is alive — but focused on growth and balance rather than climbing the corporate ladder.

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



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