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DEVELOPING A SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP IN TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Number: DAO 216-24

Effective Date: 2024-01-29

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

.01 This Department Administrative Order (DAO) establishes a Department of Commerce (Department) education and workforce policy to ensure integration of workforce development into Departmental strategies, programs and in service of the Department's mission to create and

conditions for economic growth, and invest in emerging and existing technologies critical to our economic competitiveness and national security.

.02 This DAO also establishes and prescribes the functions of a Department of Commerce Workforce Council (CWC) to further develop, coordinate, and oversee implementation of this DAO.

.03 Establishment of the CWC, its guiding principles, and its action planning agenda reflect the Department's expanded workforce-related authorities and programs. This DAO focuses on the workforce needs associated with the development and deployment of critical and emerging technologies.

.04 Establishment of the CWC in this DAO replaces the Department of Commerce Skills for Business Coordination Council, previously authorized by DOO 10-22. Accordingly, DOO 10-22 is revoked.

SECTION 2. AUTHORITY.

.01 This DAO is issued under the authority of 5 U.S.C. §§ 301, 302 and 15 U.S.C. §§ 1511, 1512.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

.01 Workforce development. The Department considers "workforce development," in the context of the Department's mission, to mean workforce development activities, policies, and programs that businesses, government, educational institutions, labor unions, and other workforce, economic development, and community-based organizations employ to prepare, connect, and advance workers in good jobs and careers. These activities, policies, and programs simultaneously support the needs of businesses, individuals, and communities. The Department prioritizes workforce development activities, policies, and programs that are employer-led and worker-centric such that investments in training and support programs begin with a job and end with a job. Employer-led programs are informed by the real talent needs of employers that are committed to hiring workers who complete the programs. This approach benefits both employers and workers. For employers, this means that the job training is tied to their specific needs for a specific job. For workers, this means that the skills they attain are needed for actual job openings.

.02 Good jobs. The Department considers “good jobs” to be consistent with the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor Good Jobs Principles, a framework for workers, businesses, labor unions, advocates, researchers, state and local governments, and Federal agencies for a shared vision of job quality. The eight principles are:

- a. Recruitment and Hiring: Qualified applicants are actively recruited – especially those from underserved communities. Applicants are free from discrimination, including unequal treatment or application of selection criteria that are unrelated to job performance. Applicants are evaluated with relevant skills-based requirements. Unnecessary educational, credentials and experience requirements are minimized.
- b. Benefits: Full-time and part-time workers are provided family-sustaining benefits that promote economic security and mobility. These include health insurance, a retirement plan, workers' compensation benefits, work-family benefits such as paid leave and caregiving supports, and others that may arise from engagement with workers. Workers are empowered and encouraged to use these benefits.
- c. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA): All workers have equal opportunity. Workers are respected, empowered, and treated fairly. DEIA is a core value and practiced norm in the workplace. Individuals from underserved communities do not face systemic barriers in the workplace. Underserved communities are persons adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, including Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; immigrants; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals in rural communities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with or recovering from substance use disorder; and justice-involved individuals.
- d. Empowerment and Representation: Workers can form and join unions. Workers can engage in protected, concerted activity without fear of retaliation. Workers contribute to decisions about their work, how it is performed, and organizational direction.
- e. Job Security and Working Conditions: Workers have a safe, healthy, and accessible workplace, built on input from workers and their representatives. Workers have job security without arbitrary or discriminatory discipline or dismissal. They have adequate hours and

predictable schedules. The use of electronic monitoring, data, and algorithms is transparent, equitable, and carefully deployed with input from workers. Workers are free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation at work. Workers are properly classified under applicable laws. Temporary or contractor labor solutions are minimized.

f. Organizational Culture: All workers belong, are valued, contribute meaningfully to the organization, and are engaged and respected especially by leadership.

g. Pay: All workers are paid a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips, and commissions. Workers' pay is fair, transparent, and equitable. Workers' wages increase with increased skills and experience.

h. Skills and Career Advancement: Workers have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future good jobs within their organizations or outside them. Workers have transparent promotion or advancement opportunities. Workers have access to quality employer- or labor-management-provided training and education.

SECTION 4. POLICY.

.01 The Department recognizes that our nation's global competitiveness derives from the ingenuity, the skills, and the drive of the American people. The United States has been the world's leader in technological innovation for decades, and that leadership has happened in significant part because of public and private investments in education and training. The Department will continue to foster U.S. technology leadership by empowering innovators to commercialize their ideas, build profitable industries and export markets, and create millions of good jobs in the United States. The Department will focus its workforce development initiatives to prepare workers with the education and skills necessary to accelerate the development and deployment of critical and emerging technologies, which are critical to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security.

.02 The Department sees economic development and workforce development as inextricably linked. Regional clusters and their supporting infrastructure, including world-class education and training programs, provide the foundation for competitive U.S. industry. Guided by its one

overarching mission to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all communities, the Department supports policies that expand, create, and coordinate industrial and innovation clusters to advance U.S. competitiveness in tandem with a modern workforce development strategy.

.03 The Department supports good jobs for all workers in all communities across the country as a building block for equitable economic growth.

Meeting businesses' talent needs now and into the future requires tapping into the talent in all of our communities; embracing diversity and inclusion as a key element of America's competitive advantage; finding new ways to bring and retain people in the labor force and helping workers develop skills throughout their careers.

.04 The Department has a three-part approach to building sustainable, employer-driven career pathways to meet employers' need for talent and to connect Americans to good jobs:

- a. Invest in employer-driven regional workforce education and training systems that lead to good jobs.
- b. Foster transformative employer practices to address challenges in identifying, recruiting, and developing a diverse, skilled workforce.
- c. Produce and disseminate timely, clear data and information to help Americans discover and participate in opportunities for skills development and economic advancement.

.05 The Department has identified 11 attributes of highly effective workforce investments and has set them as principles to guide our efforts. Principles for Workforce Investments:

- a. Employer-led to ensure skilled workers are connected to quality job opportunities.
- b. Guided by multiple community partners such as educational institutions, labor unions, community-based organizations, and economic development organizations.
- c. Include wrap-around services to support the most vulnerable populations.

- d. Advance educational and workplace diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- e. Prioritize proven earn-and-learn models like Registered Apprenticeships.
- f. Lead to stackable, industry-recognized credentials and ensure that information about credentials is publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability.
- g. Measure and evaluate outcomes such as workers' employment and earnings. Ensure that data is transparent, actionable, and linked back to those executing programs.
- h. Build sustainable systems and partnerships that endure to serve employers and workers beyond the federal investment.
- i. Connect workforce development to economic development.
- j. Coordinated across the federal government.
- k. Encourage the use of other government and private funding.

.06 The Department believes that employer-led and worker-centric workforce development activities, policies, and programs ensure businesses leadership in defining industry's skills and job needs. Business leaders should define the key jobs and skills needed for economic growth and innovation, and be integrally involved in crafting programs to address the most acute skills shortages in partnership with educational and training institutions, worker groups, unions, state and local government, and workforce and economic development leaders who collaborate to support the employers. To that end, the Department considers it critical to the success of its workforce investment programs for employers to commit to investing in their workforce. Employer commitments can take different forms. For example, employers may train workers through a work-and-learn program like a Registered Apprenticeship, which is a form of paid employment. Employers may make a conditional hire, such that their work is contingent on the successful completion of a training program and demonstration of skill acquisition. Employers also might commit to hiring a specific number of workers who successfully complete a training

program. Employers could provide in-kind support through the provision of space and equipment for training; textbooks, clothing, and other training materials; wraparound supports to trainees; and staff time to mentor and guide trainees. Groups of employers may align and codify their common and unique skills needs, including through intermediary organizations. Such organizations convene and work with employer, training participants, employees, government agencies, and other organizations to solve problems within sectors and help grow sectors by developing trust and a base of knowledge about the organizations and businesses, as well as available public and private resources.

.07 The Department will prioritize the integration of workforce and economic development strategies across its Bureaus and programs. It will prioritize investment vehicles that link place-based economic and workforce development objectives and generate evidence to guide future investments. This means, where appropriate, ensuring workforce development requirements and priorities are built into notices of funding opportunity.

.08 The Department, as appropriate, will work with businesses, education and training providers, labor unions, and non-profit organizations to advance workforce development, recognizing the critical role that employers need to play to ensure that workers have the skills they need to drive American leadership in technology and innovation. To that end, the Department will highlight best practices relating to private sector investments in education and training that align with place-based investments.

.09 The Department's partnerships with the Executive Office of the President and many Federal agencies—especially the Departments of Labor and Education—are essential to the success of its workforce programs and initiatives. The Department has multiple Memorandums of Understanding in place with the Departments of Labor and Education to leverage their individual and combined resources and expertise to support common goals related to expanding equitable access to quality jobs for workers and communities.

SECTION 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WORKFORCE COUNCIL.

.01 The Department shall establish and regularly convene the CWC to develop and implement workforce policy, programs, and initiatives across the Department, and in coordination with other Federal agencies, and to oversee implementation of this DAO.

.02 The CWC shall consist of the Secretary of Commerce as chair and the heads of the following bureaus with significant education and workforce development programs and initiatives already in place:

- a. Economic Development Administration
- b. National Institute of Standards and Technology
- c. Census Bureau
- d. National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- e. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- f. International Trade Administration
- g. Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs

.03 The CWC will review and update this list of member bureaus annually by September 30 based on their current or planned education and workforce programs and initiatives.

.04 The CWC will meet no less than twice annually. A steering committee comprised of senior staff selected by each participating bureau will meet monthly to ensure ongoing coordination of policy and strategy development and implementation.

- a. The Director of Policy and Strategic Planning or designee shall convene the monthly meetings of the steering committee and serve as the CWC Executive Director.
- b. Each bureau head shall designate representatives to the CWC steering committee. Representatives' principal duties must include directly overseeing the development and implementation of education and workforce programs and initiatives in their bureaus. Bureau heads may select multiple representatives, but they must designate one as the lead representative for the bureau on the CWC.

.05 The CWC shall be responsible for aligning and advancing the strategies, policies, programs, and initiatives to implement actions described in this DAO. As appropriate, the CWC may work with non-member Commerce bureaus, other agencies, and the Executive Office of the President. The CWC may utilize existing studies and policies adopted by previous departmental workforce councils and initiatives, as appropriate.

.06 The CWC also shall raise the external profile of the Department's workforce development vision and initiatives by establishing a public communications strategy in conjunction with Department and relevant bureau public affairs and public engagement offices.

.07 The CWC shall have a charter, which shall establish the rules under which the CWC will function and shall be reviewed annually.

.08 To support the CWC's work, the Director of Policy and Strategic Planning or designee will establish a community of practice comprising staff across the Department's education and workforce development programs. The community of practice will facilitate information sharing, promotion of best practices, professional development, and other activities to increase the effectiveness and impact of the Department's workforce policy, programs, and initiatives.

SECTION 6. ACTIONS.

.01 The CWC will ensure the Department's Principles for Workforce Investment (Section 4.05) guide program development and implementation. The CWC may update the principles periodically to reflect the latest evidence.

.02 The CWC will conduct an annual inventory of education and workforce programs across the Department, including program funding and personnel.

.03 Through the CWC, the Department will set and publish metrics and goals on the individual and aggregate outcomes of its workforce investment programs. These metrics and goals should include outcome and output metrics, such as establishment of business-led sectoral partnerships, persons trained and placed in jobs by sectors and by demographic groups, job quality metrics, associated private sector workforce training investments, and formation of new industry-endorsed

education and training programs and credentials. They also may include input-focused metrics such as employer commitments, partnerships with educational institutions, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs created.

.04 Each CWC member bureau will set goals for its workforce development programs and activities related to the implementation of this DAO and any other actions as established by the CWC in furtherance of the policies established by this DAO. These include any workforce investment programs, business engagement efforts, and data and research initiatives. Each CWC bureau will report to the Secretary through the CWC on these goals and their progress in meeting them annually. The goals will be first due on March 29, 2024. Subsequent goals and annual reporting will be first due on September 30, 2024, and annually thereafter or as otherwise directed by the CWC. The Department will publish these reports on its website.

SECTION 7. EFFECT ON OTHER ORDERS.

.01 This Order establishes the Department Administrative Order 216-24, Developing a Skilled Workforce for U.S. Leadership in Technological Innovation and Global Competitiveness and revokes Department Organization Order 10-22, dated May 18, 2016.

Signed by: Director for Office of Policy and Strategic Planning

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration



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