

NOVEMBER 13, 2024

Fact Sheet: White House Hosts “Classroom to Career” Summit, Celebrates Successful Efforts to Expand High-Quality Career Pathways and Workforce Development Programs in Every Community

Today, President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden will welcome approximately 200 education and workforce leaders to the White House for the Biden-Harris Administration’s “Classroom to Career” Summit. The Administration’s [Investing in America](#) agenda is creating millions of good-paying jobs—many of which do not require a four-year college degree—and its investments will continue to drive job creation for years to come. The Summit will highlight record progress to expand career pathways to these good-paying jobs in infrastructure, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and more.

The Summit will bring together Cabinet members and other senior Administration officials, state and local elected officials, community college presidents, K-12 leaders, unions, workforce development leaders from the nine [White House Workforce Hubs](#) and other communities across the country, business leaders, representatives of philanthropic organizations, and students.

At the Summit, **President Biden will announce that more than \$80 billion from his American Rescue Plan has now been committed to strengthening and expanding the American workforce**, helping to meet the promise of these historic investments—from supporting high-quality free community college programs in high-demand fields, to expanding Registered Apprenticeships, to attracting and retaining a skilled, diverse workforce in critical industries. These efforts are helping students and workers—including those without four-year degrees—access good-paying opportunities spurred by the Investing in America agenda.

The Summit will take place nearly fifteen years after Dr. Biden, a lifelong educator and community-college champion, led the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges as Second Lady, where she set the path forward for community colleges to be a critical part of America's economic vision for the future.

Senior Administration officials, federal agencies, and key external stakeholders will announce new actions and recent achievements during the Summit, including:

Expanding quality career and technical education (CTE) and community college training

During today's Summit, Administration officials will highlight efforts to expand access to evidence-based, high-quality CTE programs and affordable community college pathways:

- **First Lady Jill Biden** will announce that 34 states and Washington, DC now have a free community college program. In total, over 400 colleges, cities, and states now offer tuition-free college and job training—up from about 50 programs when she, President Obama, and then-Vice President Biden launched the America's College Promise Initiative in 2015. Several of the newest free community college plans were launched with support from American Rescue Plan funds. As First Lady, Dr. Biden has championed community colleges and workforce training programs, traveling the country to highlight evidence-based models and promising practices that connect high school and community college students to good-paying jobs.
- **The Department of Education (ED)** will publish new analysis of ED data on postsecondary programs that provide pathways to jobs created or fueled by the Investing in America agenda. The Department will also release a mapping tool to help the public find those programs and a public-use data set that will allow researchers and policymakers to further explore these connections. This analysis comes on the heels of a years-long effort to better connect both high schools and postsecondary programs to career pathways through the Unlocking Career Success Initiative, which invested \$31 million in building model career-connected

programs in high schools that will provide up to 120,000 students with pathways to high-wage, high-demand careers.

- **The Department of Commerce (DOC)** will announce that over one-quarter of states and territories have proactively allocated more than \$300 million in Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding towards workforce development initiatives. These states are building the skilled construction workforce needed to connect every American to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet by investing in community college job training programs, Registered Apprenticeships, and sectoral partnership training models.
- **DOC** will also announce that more than 80 community colleges across 22 states have created or expanded programming to train semiconductor workers for advanced manufacturing jobs spurred by the President's CHIPS and Science Act. In addition, ten states have announced new dedicated state funding for workforce development investments to support CHIPS facilities.

Additional new announcements:

- **Scholarship America, ECMC Foundation, GoFundMe.org, Trellis Foundation, Ascendium Education Group, and the Crimsonbridge Foundation** will launch a new national emergency aid program to assist students, including students who are single mothers, in 2025. Nearly 10 percent of undergraduates—1.7 million students—are single mothers, and while single moms earn higher GPAs than their non-parenting peers, they experience greater rates of financial distress. Research shows emergency grants are effective at keeping financially distressed students on track to complete their degrees.
- **Invest in Our Future** will support expansion of **YouthBuild's** new solar panel training and certification pilot program to 16 new locations in 2025. YouthBuild's solar program, which launched its first three locations in October, partners with industry to prepare youth ages 16 to 24 for good clean energy jobs spurred by the Inflation Reduction Act.
- **The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)**, with support from **Ascendium**, will launch an initiative to help community

colleges design processes to build capacity to create new Registered Apprenticeship programs in occupational sectors that have not traditionally used apprenticeship as a training pathway. ACCT will engage 20 community colleges from across the country in designing and implementing new Registered Apprenticeship programs, demonstrating the potential for community colleges to serve as apprenticeship intermediaries in addition to instructional providers.

Growing Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality workforce programs

The Administration has made record high-quality workforce development models, including Registered Apprenticeships—the gold-standard earn-and-learn pathway—as well as industry-led sector partnerships that bring together employers, unions, community colleges, and other partners to develop high-quality training programs.

- **The Department of Labor (DOL)** will announce that more than one million Americans have started a Registered Apprenticeship since President Biden took office—and this month, the number of women in apprenticeships will surpass 100,000 for the first time ever.
- **DOL** will also announce that 46 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico now have K-12 teacher Registered Apprenticeship programs. Not a single state had a teacher Registered Apprenticeship program when the Administration took office.
- **DOC** will announce that 12,000 participants have been successfully trained and placed into good jobs in the first wave of the Good Jobs Challenge, a flagship sector strategies program funded by President Biden's American Rescue Plan.
- **The Department of Transportation (DOT)** will announce that it has invested \$93 million to support the rail workforce since the start of the Administration through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. These funds, which include \$54 million awarded in October, invest in the hardworking Americans who will help maintain and operate the nation's rail networks into the future by creating new apprenticeship programs, expanding training

opportunities, establishing partnerships with universities, and advancing innovative research.

- **DOT** will also announce it has awarded a total of \$137 million in workforce funding to transit agencies in over 100 communities since the Administration took office through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Low or No Emission grant program. This program gives transit agencies the option to set aside up to 5 percent of grant funds to train workers on new electric vehicle fleets.
- **DOT** will also publish new case studies on three states—California, Maryland, and Oregon—that are developing skilled, diverse infrastructure workforces by investing their flexible federal highway funds. Michigan and Pennsylvania have also announced workforce development initiatives that will lead to significant workforce investments from their state departments of transportation. This comes six months after the Administration called on states to invest at least 0.5 percent of eligible highway formula funds in high-quality workforce development approaches such as Registered Apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and supportive services like child care and transportation for workers.
- **DOT** will highlight how hundreds of projects are now using local (geographic) and economic hiring preferences—an order of magnitude more than a decade ago. Local and economic hiring preferences are an important tool to expand hiring of underrepresented populations into good construction jobs, by establishing hiring goals for workers from disadvantaged circumstances or distressed neighborhoods. President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) made local and economic hiring preferences newly allowable, and DOT has strongly encouraged these preferences through its discretionary grant process, technical assistance, and place-based initiatives. Prior to BIL, only 16 pilot projects had preferences, all of them in highway and transit. Today, the Federal Highway Administration alone has approved 74 projects with project labor agreements and local hiring preferences—totaling nearly \$4.6 billion—and preferences also cover rail, port, and airport projects.

Additional new announcements:

- **The Families and Workers Fund (FWF)** will announce it has surpassed \$45 million in aligned funding commitments—matched by nearly \$60 million from peer funders—to expand pathways to good jobs and build an inclusive, competitive workforce. These resources support initiatives like **PowerCorpsPHL's** Climate Corps in Philadelphia, which collaborates with employers to offer paid workforce training and supportive services—such as transportation and mental health resources—to connect out-of-school and out-of-work young people with good-paying jobs in climate resilience and clean energy. The program transitions 92 percent of its graduates to quality career paths and substantially reduces recidivism among justice-involved young people. With support from FWF, PowerCorpsPHL will scale Climate Corps models to ten additional cities, serving an additional 1,300 young people.
- **The State of Maryland** will soon issue a call for applications under its new \$24 million, six-year workforce investments using federal highway funds. The state will seek applications to provide high-quality workforce approaches to help fill good-paying transportation infrastructure jobs—including those created through the Baltimore Workforce Hub—such as Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, integrated education and training, and supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance.
- **The Washington Education Association (WEA)** launched the first educator-led, union-run teacher Registered Apprenticeship program in the nation in 2022—and last month, WEA successfully transitioned its innovative teacher residency program to an apprenticeship model. The WEA Apprenticeship Residency in Teaching (WEA-ART), which addresses acute special education teacher shortages in the state, was developed with a grant from U.S. DOL. The 18-month program trains future teachers in ten school districts across Washington using a school-based, clinical preparation model, with resident apprentices earning at least \$40,000 with benefits during their full-year co-teaching placement.
- **Safal Partners** will announce commitments from its partners to provide cybersecurity Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for 2,000 Americans by the end of 2025. This follows the nearly 3,000

cybersecurity apprentices Safal has already served, 82 percent of whom came from underserved and underrepresented communities.

- **OpenClassrooms** will train up to 300 Registered Apprentices in cybersecurity and other technical career paths by 2026, in partnership with **Wright Resource Group** and other affiliates.

Spreading skills-based and skills-first hiring

Millions of Americans already possess the skills and capabilities to succeed at family-sustaining jobs but are held back because they lack a four-year college degree. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the Federal government is leading the way in implementing skills-based practices, opening up pathways to good-paying jobs for more Americans by valuing their skills and abilities—regardless how they acquired those skills. At the Summit, Administration officials will urge employers in all sectors—public, private, and nonprofit—to remove unnecessary degree requirements, and to recognize the value of and provide high-quality alternative pathways such as registered apprenticeship and community college programs.

- **The General Services Administration (GSA)** will announce it intends to apply a skills-based hiring approach to an estimated \$100 billion of federal agency task orders, by eliminating unnecessary degree and experience requirements for IT cybersecurity jobs at the Master Contract level in its planned Polaris and Alliant 3 Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts.
- **The Department of Energy (DOE)** will modify its multi-billion-dollar, enterprise-wide IT contract to remove degree requirements for cyber and IT jobs—impacting over 1,000 full-time-equivalent positions by December 2024.
- **The Department of Defense (DOD)** will apply a skill-based approach to more than 75 jobs created through its \$40 million Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) contract, recognizing education, training, certifications, or years of experience—including experience gained through on-the-job training.

- **DOL** and **DOC** will publish [*The Skills-First Hiring Starter Kit*](#)—a plain-language, practical guide to help talent-hungry employers broaden candidate pools, boost retention, and improve worker engagement. The guide, which can be read in less than 15 minutes, is a user-friendly resource on hiring and promoting workers based on the skills they have instead of unnecessary education, degree, or other requirements. The guide was developed in consultation with a diverse group of 15 organizations, including the Business Roundtable, North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), LinkedIn, AFL-CIO, Opportunity@Work, Indeed, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and SHRM Foundation.

Additional new announcements:

- **Leidos** launched the Leidos Skills Taxonomy, which the company will apply to its full workforce of 48,000 employees as part of its comprehensive skills strategy. Leidos is also pledging to share best practices and outcomes from its skills strategy across the industry, and to hire 15,000 Veterans and military spouses by 2030.
- **Palo Alto Networks** has successfully mapped the capabilities and skills of over 8,500 employees and developed targeted learning programs to enhance these workers' skills. Since March 2024, the company has used this skills-first approach to onboard 400 new hires. The company now commits to mapping capabilities and skills of an additional 4,000 employees by the end of 2025, and will expand upskilling opportunities to over 5,000 existing employees, focusing initially on sales and technical solutions roles.
- **Opportunity@Work** will publish a [new analysis](#) of skills-first practices implemented by state governments in 2022 and 2023. The analysis finds that in 15 states that took action to remove unnecessary four-year degree requirements from job postings, 7% more middle- and high-wage state jobs—or 3,000 additional job postings—became open to workers without four-year degrees.

Leading the way in the White House Workforce Hubs

In May 2023, First Lady Jill Biden announced five White House Workforce Hubs in regions where the Administration's Investing in America agenda is catalyzing historic public- and private-sector investments— Augusta, Baltimore, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and Phoenix. Since then, President Biden designated four additional Workforce Hubs in Milwaukee, Upstate New York, Philadelphia, and the state of Michigan. In these Workforce Hubs, the Administration has partnered with state and local officials, employers, unions, community colleges, K-12 schools, and other stakeholders to ensure a diverse and skilled workforce can meet the demand for labor driven by these investments. The President, First Lady, and other senior Administration officials have traveled to the Workforce Hubs, convened Hub partners, and celebrated progress to expand career pathways and high-quality workforce approaches.

The White House Workforce Hubs have continued to lead the way on equitable workforce development between convenings, taking actions such as:

- **In Columbus**, anchor institution Columbus State Community College, and partners Intel and the Ohio Semiconductor Collaboration Network, completed the July 2023 commitment to develop a new certificate program for good semiconductor technician jobs. In January, the partners launched the Semiconductor Fundamentals Certificate program, a stackable credential that builds to an Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology AAS degree, which has already enrolled 100 students.
- **In Baltimore**, Amtrak has put a memorandum of understanding in place with the Maryland Philanthropy Network and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development to provide \$5 million over four years for pre-apprenticeship training and supportive services for apprentices, helping Amtrak to meet its Hub commitment to ensure at least 50 percent of apprentice hours for Baltimore City residents in the ZIP codes immediately impacted by the Frederick Douglass Tunnel Project.
- **In Augusta**, Hub anchor institutions Augusta Technical College and Aiken Technical College deepened their partnerships with local building and construction trades unions to expand inclusive access to local trades apprenticeship programs. Augusta Technical College is newly partnering

with the UA Local 150 Plumbers and Steamfitters to co-deliver Registered Apprenticeship, opening a co-branded training facility to deliver a plumbing and steamfitting apprenticeship program, and expanding the co-delivered Registered Apprenticeship program with the IBEW Local 1579 to serve an additional 200 apprentices. Aiken Technical College, in partnership with the local building and construction trades, launched a pre-apprenticeship program with preferential entry to apprenticeship programs across 17 trades, with the first cohort starting in October 2024.

- **In Pittsburgh**, Hub partners cut the ribbon on the first-in-the-nation EV Automotive Technician Registered Apprenticeship Program in October, fulfilling a commitment made at the Hub's November 2023 convening with First Lady Jill Biden and expanding training opportunities for good clean energy jobs. The program is a true public-private partnership—hosted at a new EV lab at the Community College of Allegheny County, with support for technical instruction provided by a \$3.75 million DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant to anchor institution Partner4Work; employer contributions in the form of apprentices' wages and benefits; and equipment purchased with support from the Hillman Family Foundations. The program will include outreach and recruitment of apprentices from underserved communities. The first cohort will begin in spring 2025.
- Today, the City of **Philadelphia** will announce three upcoming projects that will be covered by the new Geographic and Economic Hiring Preferences Pilot Program. These include two federally funded transportation projects identified by the Streets Department and one lead service line project from the Philadelphia Water Department, with collective costs greater than \$87 million. Today's announcement marks the first phase in Philadelphia-wide adoption of these hiring preferences—a commitment made at the Hub's convening in July 2024—which will expand opportunities for Philadelphia residents by requiring that at least half apprentices on publicly funded projects come from disadvantaged ZIP codes in the City.
- Building on efforts launched in the **Upstate New York Hub**, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Micron will scale their innovative partnership on AFT's Advanced Technology Framework to

the **Michigan Hub** and Minnesota, with support from a new \$1.7 million grant from Natcast, established by the CHIPS and Science Act. AFT's Framework provides industry-based career exploration to prepare high school students for technical careers in the semiconductor supply chain. The Framework is already being implemented across 10 school districts in New York.

- Today, **in Milwaukee**, BuildUS announced it will commit \$250,000 to the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP) | BIG STEP, given its proven track record in connecting people across Wisconsin, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, into family-sustaining, union jobs. BuildUS funding will support increased capacity for clean water infrastructure and lead service line coordination, outreach, program development, and operation, as well as support instruction and additional services for students.
- **In Phoenix**, TSMC successfully launched the state of Arizona's first semiconductor technician Registered Apprenticeship program in April with support from the City of Phoenix and the Arizona State Apprenticeship Office, following its commitment to establish the program at the Hub's January convening. TSMC anticipates expanding the program to hundreds of apprentices in 2025.

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