

Biden-Harris Career Pathways and Workforce Development Priorities

Executive Summary

The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that every American has access to equitable pathways to good-paying jobs in growing fields, no matter their ZIP code or degree attainment. That is why, as the Investing in America agenda creates millions of new jobs in industries of the future, the Administration has made record investments in Registered Apprenticeships and other workforce training, community colleges, and more. Through the work led by First Lady Jill Biden, the Administration has worked with local communities to convene Workforce Hubs across the country to expand pathways to good-paying jobs. However, to meet the ambitious goals of the Investing in America agenda, we need an all-of-society effort to create these pipelines. This memo outlines seven of the Administration's priorities for advancing high-impact workforce development strategies to ensure we meet the promise of these landmark investments and expand opportunity for students and workers, and sets forth several suggestions for ways in which interested philanthropic organizations can play a role.

Career Pathways and Workforce Development Priorities

1. Invest in high-quality career pathways models

There is significant demand to identify, support, and rigorously evaluate evidence-based and innovative strategies and activities to improve and modernize career and technical education (CTE). The Department of Education (ED) announced the winners of the department's inaugural [Career Connected High School \(CCHS\)](#) grant program, a new \$25 million competition to launch career-connected high schools and partnerships across the nation that leverage ED's four key strategies for unlocking career success—dual enrollment, quality work-based learning, opportunities to obtain valuable credentials, and career advising and navigation. ED was able to fund 19 applications, but received over 161 applications requesting more than \$860 million. Philanthropy can play a role by supporting additional high schools to become career connected and rigorously evaluating approaches.

2. Support career and technical education in rural communities

Smaller communities, including rural communities, receive smaller formula funding awards from Perkins due to the statutory requirements for funding allocations (70 percent of funding for secondary schools is based on each school district's share of low-income children ages 5-17, and 30 percent is based on each district's share of the total number of children ages 5-17). This makes it difficult for rural districts to afford the fixed costs that districts face regardless of size—such as equipment and technology—in order to run robust CTE programs. Philanthropy can play a role in helping address the unique challenges and opportunities around CTE pathways in rural communities through the development of a national rural pathways coalition that provides technical assistance, funding, and advocacy.

3. Provide support for new career counseling initiatives

Career advising and navigation, one of the four key strategies identified by ED to scale pathways opportunities, is the strategy on which ED receives the most requests from state and local collaborators—but is also a strategy in need of greater innovation and research. Philanthropy can play a role in supporting new solutions to ensure all students receive the career advising they need in middle and high school, postsecondary programs, and beyond.

4. Bolster education-to-workforce programs and high-road training partnerships to meet local demand in growing sectors spurred by new investments

Unprecedented federal investments in communities across the country, made through the President’s [Investing in America](#) agenda, have also catalyzed private-sector expansion in critical sectors such as manufacturing, clean energy, infrastructure, and technology. These investments create the opportunity and need for systemic, comprehensive education-to-workforce pipelines, as well as workforce- and education-specific place-based funding, which will help ensure that K-12 and postsecondary institutions and high-road workforce training providers are ready to meet the moment. Philanthropy can support this effort by supporting and complementing existing federal education, workforce, and Investing in America funds, including resources to support:

- Community colleges standing up new high-quality certificate/training programs;
- K-12 districts creating new technical education curricula in strategic sectors;
- Labor-management partnerships for job training;
- Pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs that give students and workers earn-and-learn pathways into good jobs in in-demand fields.

For this priority and others in this memo, specific opportunities include working with the [nine Workforce Hubs](#)—regions across the country seeing outsized investment. The South is also a key region of focus, and philanthropy can help ensure federal funds flowing to this region are deployed in ways that advance job quality, equity, and worker empowerment.

5. Identify effective routes to elevate perceptions and awareness of career-connected learning and good-paying trades occupations

Developing a pipeline of academically and technically strong, career-literate students is critical for the influx of high-wage, high-demand careers that are rapidly growing as a result of unprecedented federal investments. However, many students and families are unaware of career opportunities in emerging industries and the skills necessary to prepare for them. To successfully implement the Investing in America agenda, we need effective models that reach diverse communities and improve perceptions about new and growing good-paying career opportunities—including those that do not require a four-year college degree. Philanthropy can play a role, including by supporting:

- High-profile recruitment drives, cultural events, and media opportunities for expanding opportunities in these trades;
- Regional and nationwide marketing efforts to share data around growing occupations and sectors and narratives about how to pursue those careers with students, parents, educators, and other key stakeholders;

- Research to understand the most effective way to reach students, families, and workers.

6. Expand access to supportive services

Supportive services such as child care, transportation, housing, work tools, and emergency assistance are critical to enabling underserved students and workers to enroll and stay in training, and successfully transition to good jobs. Philanthropy can play a role by expanding access to supportive services, including through high-value strategies such as:

- Seeding or scaling programs' efforts to expand supportive services for their students and apprentices;
- Identifying innovative models for local capacity-building for services such as child care, while also improving job quality for service providers (one such example is [EPIC](#));
- Supporting and building the evidence base for specific interventions such as drivers' licenses, access to a reliable vehicle, and auto insurance for construction workers (one such example is the [Construction Trades Career Fund](#) from Everybody Builds);
- Expand successful models that promote inclusive workplaces, prevent discrimination and harassment, and provide mentoring and coaching for apprentices from underrepresented groups to additional locations (one such example is [RISE Up](#));
- Filling gaps where other funding sources cannot be used or are insufficient to provide adequate services (for example, adequate stipends for pre-apprentices).

7. Support capacity for local communities to coordinate, convene, and plan for new investments

With the influx of federal resources and opportunities, many communities are in need of dedicated capacity to coordinate and maximize their efforts—whether in a high-concentration investment sector (for example, construction or water infrastructure) or toward a key local priority (for instance, getting workers from disadvantaged ZIP codes into jobs on Investing in America projects; scaling local pre-apprenticeship programs; or tracking progress toward community-wide workforce equity goals). Philanthropy can play a role by:

- Funding dedicated staff time, whether a new staff position or time from an existing staff member of a key local institution or agency;
- Supporting costs associated with organizing and holding regular stakeholder convenings or building community infrastructure such as labor-community alliances;
- Expanding specific models, such as the Department of Labor's [Job Quality Academy](#), to additional regions or sectors.

The White House does not endorse any nonfederal entity, product, service, or publication. Links to websites and resources outside the U.S. Federal Government are being provided for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the White House of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The White House bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.