



TEAM: EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Issue Experts:

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SUBJECT: FROM REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT NEEDS TO EDUCATION INVESTMENT

REQUESTED ACTION:

The Capital Region urges federal policymakers to modernize workforce and education policy to align with real-time industry demand, accelerate infrastructure delivery, and expand access to family-sustaining careers. We request:

- **Reauthorize and modernize WIOA** to strengthen sector-based partnerships, improve performance measures (credential attainment, wage progression, apprenticeship completion), and provide regional flexibility.
- **Sustain and expand U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship investments**, with streamlined access for small and mid-sized employers.
- **Expand short-term Pell eligibility and strengthen Perkins V** to support high-quality, industry-recognized credentials in priority sectors.
- **Reduce duplicative regulatory and reporting requirements** across workforce and education programs to lower administrative burden while maintaining accountability.
- **Support employer-driven, stackable certification pathways** aligned to infrastructure, clean energy, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education, and technology sectors.

Workforce policy must function as economic infrastructure—predictable, aligned, and outcome-driven.

HOW THIS SUPPORTS BUSINESSES:

The Capital Region's competitiveness depends on reliable, industry-aligned talent pipelines. Modernized WIOA frameworks and expanded apprenticeship pathways allow employers to co-design training, reduce recruitment risk, and upskill incumbent workers



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to meet evolving technological demands. When workforce systems reflect employer demand, infrastructure projects move faster, innovation scales more efficiently, and businesses operate with greater certainty.

Expanded short-term Pell access and strengthened Perkins investments increase the pool of credentialed workers entering high-demand industries while preserving quality standards. Businesses benefit from reduced onboarding costs, improved retention, and clearer certification pathways that reflect industry expectations. Federal workforce investment is not simply programmatic spending; it is an economic multiplier that supports productivity, competitiveness, and regional growth.

HOW THIS SUPPORTS RESIDENTS OF OUR REGION:

With more than 2.5 million residents across urban, suburban, and rural communities, the Capital Region requires accessible and flexible pathways into high-wage employment. Aligned federal policy supports seamless transitions from K–12 to dual enrollment, apprenticeships, and postsecondary credentials, as well as reengagement opportunities for adult learners. Earn-and-learn models reduce student debt while connecting residents directly to employment opportunities in priority sectors.

Industry-recognized certifications tied to employer demand increase wage mobility and long-term economic stability for families. Integrated supports that address childcare, transportation, housing, and educator shortages strengthen workforce participation and completion rates. When education systems align with economic need, residents move from short-term jobs into sustainable careers that build community resilience.