

Federal Workforce Update and State Policy Trends

October 29, 2025



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GOVERNORS
ASSOCIATION

The National Governors Association

Founding

The May 1908 meeting of President Theodore Roosevelt and governors led to the creation of the National Governors Association.



The first meeting of the National Governors Association in 1908.

What We Do

The National Governors Association (NGA) is the bipartisan organization of the nation's governors. Through NGA, governors identify priority issues and deal with matters of public policy and governance at the state, national and global levels.

The NGA Center for Best Practices is the only research and consulting group that directly serves governors and helps governors and executive branch leaders develop and implement innovative solutions to public policy challenges. Our Government Relations team ensures that states are a strong voice in Washington, D.C. We also provide management consultative services to both new and incumbent governors, their senior executive staff and trusted advisors.

NGA Center for Best Practices

- Children & Families
- Energy
- Health
- Homeland Security & Cybersecurity
- Infrastructure
- K- 12 Education
- Land Management, Agriculture and Housing
- Postsecondary Education
- Public Safety & Legal Counsel
- **Workforce Development & Economic Policy**



Federal Workforce Policy Landscape



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Education, Workforce & Community Investment Task Force

- Co-chaired by Governors Evers and Gordon
- Federal priorities:
 - Farm Bill reauthorization
 - Expanding innovative educational experiences, apprenticeship opportunities and non-degree pathways including WIOA reauthorization
 - Working with the House and Senate bipartisan Paid Leave Working Groups
 - Continued investment in federal education programs that address workforce needs and efforts to improve SLDSs
 - Increasing housing supply by strengthening the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and streamlining zoning, permitting, and land use policies



America's
Talent Strategy

America's AI
Action Plan and AI Youth
Education EO

Federal Workforce
Policy Landscape

USDOL and DOE
Interagency Agreement

Workforce Pell

Governors Reshaping Workforce Development: Turning WIOA Challenges into Workforce Solutions

Published April 20 25



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Research Methodology

- **34 states** were interviewed between April and December 2024
- **17 states** participated in surveys
- Data analyzed in coordination with the Harvard Project on Workforce to identify key themes and trends

Table 1: **Overview of state interview participants**

State descriptors	Categories	No. of states interviewed (total = 34)
Political distribution	Republican Governors	16
	Democratic Governors	18
	Republican-led Legislature	17
	Democratic-led Legislature	15
	Split Legislature	2
Regional distribution	Northeast	4
	South	11
	Midwest	7
	West	12

Key Findings

1. States are **shifting organizational structures** to improve workforce governance.
2. States are adopting **stakeholder - driven approaches to WIOA planning** .
3. States are investing in workforce services to **attract and retain businesses** .
4. **WIOA funding challenges** are prompting states to seek alternative solutions.
5. States are expanding **training programs and supportive services** to engage new workers.

State Policy Trends and Best Practices



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Build It AZ Apprenticeship Initiative

- Double the number of construction and trades registered apprentices in Arizona by 2026
- Announced by Governor Hobbs in August 2023 as part of her Talent Ready AZ initiative
- \$3.65M WIOA and APRA investment:
 - Increase capacity (instructors, equipment, and facilities)
 - Recruit and retain apprentices
 - Provide wrap-around supports
 - Expand access to pre-apprenticeships

BUILD IT AZ

Maryland Governor's Apprenticeship Pledge

- Launched by Governor Moore during National Apprenticeship Week 2024
- Led by the state workforce board
- Commit industry leaders to creating or expanding existing apprenticeship programs
- Goal to recruit 500 new employers, 5,000 new apprentices, and at least 5 additional public agencies to registered apprenticeship by this November 2025



Idaho Launch

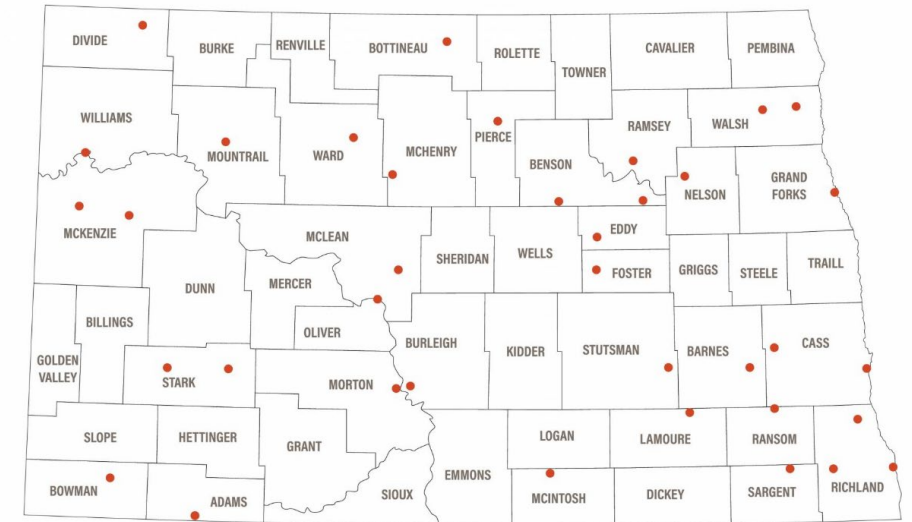
- Developed by the Idaho Workforce Development Council to retain young people in Idaho and improve going-on rates
- Council defines in-demand careers and training programs and covers 80% of tuition and fees for recent high school graduates who enroll at eligible Idaho institutions
- Outcomes as of March 2025:
 - 11% increase in postsecondary education enrollment overall
 - 18% increase in community college enrollment
 - 15% increase in economically disadvantaged students enrolling in postsecondary education



North Dakota Regional Workforce Impact Program

- Developed by the North Dakota Workforce Development Council to incentivize locally-driven workforce solutions
- First round (ARPA): one collaborative application per region with 25% match for skills-training, career exploration, housing, childcare, talent attraction, etc.
- Second round (state general funds): multiple collaborative applications with a 25% match talent attraction, retention, training infrastructure, childcare infrastructure, and capital investments

REGIONAL WORKFORCE IMPACT PROGRAM (RWIP) RECIPIENTS



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Minnesota Drive for Five

- Governor Walz's signature workforce initiative focused on the state's top 5 sectors defined by high demand, high growth, and family-sustaining wages
 - Technology
 - Trades
 - Caring professions
 - Manufacturing
 - Education
- \$20 M state appropriation:
 - Competitive grants for education and training
 - Competitive grants for trade associations or chambers of commerce
 - Deploying local business service representatives



Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

- Regional sector partnership among 20+ community partners and 45+ manufacturers, including General Dynamics Electric Boat
- No cost, short-term training program (foundational and employer-specific courses)
- Targeted to unemployed and underemployed workers
- Spinoff program for high school students



Colorado Non-Degree Credentials Framework

- Led by Colorado Workforce Development Council
- Used to evaluate credentials for the ETPL and the Colorado Career Development Incentive Program
- Demand = Top Job in the Talent Pipeline Report or; regional need or emerging credential or; recognized by an accredited body
- Evidence of Skills = clearly identified information on skills and competencies
- Employment Outcomes = leads to a living-wage job or; develops skills and competencies needed for a living-wage job or; stackable with other credentials to earn a living wage
- Stackability = part of a sequence of credentials allowing for skill development, career progression, and increased earnings over time or; prerequisite to an industry- required credential or; leads to living-wage job on its own



AI and the Future of Work



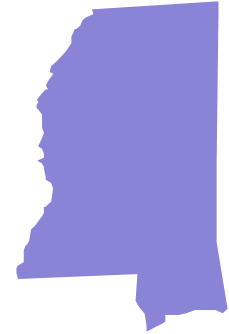
New Jersey AI Hub

- \$72M founding investment from Microsoft, CoreWeave, Princeton, and NJEDA
- R&D; commercialization and innovation; education and workforce development



Virginia AI Career Launch Pad

- Hub for AI trainings ranging from basic, no-cost courses to undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Google AI training scholarships



Mississippi - NVIDIA MOU

- Develop AI curriculum and certificates
- Professional development and stakeholder engagement
- Support private-sector adoption of AI

Questions?

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