



April 24, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey,

On behalf of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), we would like to express our appreciation for your increased funding for the workforce development system in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act. We understand the tremendous challenges anticipated with your FY 2018 funding allocation and write today to offer recommendations on workforce program funding levels for our core FY 2018 priorities.

First, we encourage FY 2018 investment in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs at their authorized funding levels, and no less than the investment at the FY 2016 enacted levels. This investment, combined with maintaining the WIOA Title I State Set Aside at 15 percent, provides the resources critical to closing skills gaps for our country's employers and quality jobs for more Americans.

Second, we encourage a minimum investment of \$100 million for the Apprenticeship USA Initiative, an increase of \$10 million above FY 2016. This funding will support innovative, job-driven approaches in states to expand apprenticeship programs to train workers with the 21st century skills that meet employer and industry workforce needs to rebuild America's middle-class.

Third, veterans deserve employment and training programs to be supported no less than FY 2016 enacted levels and retained at the USDOL. The workforce development system serves as the vehicle for alignment and integration of federal job training, education, human services, and other programs. Therefore, Congress should reject any attempt to separate veterans employment and training services, which are currently integrated within the workforce development system and providing real quality job outcomes for our veterans.

Fourth, Unemployment Insurance (UI) state administration should be sufficiently funded. These funds, now at a 30-year low, should be no less than current funding levels, even though this does not provide states adequate funding for administering their UI programs, nor does it prepare them for the next economic disruption. This is not simply about the benefit; it's about getting Americans back to work more quickly.

In the spirit of getting Americans back to work, of the funds allocated for UI State operations, a minimum of \$185 million should be invested for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA). RESEA helps states utilize cutting edge strategies to reduce long-term unemployment. \$115 million was allotted for RESEA in FY 2016.

Finally, we strongly urge that all investments in upskilling a workforce to rebuild America's infrastructure be made through the WIOA system, to effectively and efficiently leverage partnerships, the American Job Center system and other funding already committed to education, training and employment outcomes.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request. The continuation of these vital, integrated workforce development services will ensure a skilled, educated and relevant workforce to grow America's economy and provide quality jobs for all

Sincerely,



Dale Peinecke, Commissioner
Washington State Employment Security Department
NASWA Board President



Scott B. Sanders, Executive Director
NASWA

NASWA is a national organization of state administrators of the publicly-funded state workforce system, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), employment services, training programs, unemployment insurance, employment statistics and labor market information. NASWA's goal is to drive the national workforce agenda by providing policy expertise on workforce development, including unemployment insurance issues that support transition to new jobs and careers.