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Better Jobs Through Evidence and Innovation Act

U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)

Robust evidence shows that programs that upskill workers support long-term economic mobility for individual workers, including those without a college degree, and the American economy.^[1] However, the present workforce development system does not make funding available for the most effective skills training programs. These programs are giving workers skills to build sustainable careers in IT, health care, manufacturing, and financial services.^[2] Proven programs are ready and able to serve workers and communities but remain severely underfunded. Successful incubators also lack support for innovative social entrepreneurs to build, refine, and test new business models and meet the diverse needs of workers and employers across the country.

The Better Jobs through Evidence and Innovation Act will meet communities' employment needs by establishing the Workforce Development Innovation Fund at the U.S. Department of Labor. The Workforce Development Innovation Fund will:

- Provide for **three tiers of funding** to support the development and scale-up of evidence-based employment and training programs **that generate demonstrated, long-term economic improvements for jobseekers and employers**, as well as high-quality evaluations of their impact;
- **Make a wide array of entities eligible for funding**, such as State or local workforce boards, non-governmental organizations, tribal organizations, and institutions of higher education;
- Allow **the most proven programs to focus their resources on continuous improvement and scale-up** when additional evaluation is no longer necessary;
- Reserve up to 10 percent of funds for technical assistance **to enable a range of communities and providers to participate**—such as applicants from rural communities—including support to refine existing programs and conduct related planning activities; and
- Complement the Administration's investment in evidence-based, proven workforce training programs that equip workers with the skills needed by employers to fill quality jobs.

^[1] J-PAL (2022), "Sectoral Employment Programs as a Path to Quality Jobs,"

https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publication/Evidence-Review_Sectoral-Employment_2222022_0.pdf

^[2] Holzer (2021), "After COVID-19: Building a More Coherent and Effective Workforce Development System in the United States," Brookings Institution, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Holzer_LO_v5-1.pdf.