



Better Jobs Through Evidence and Innovation Act

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The U.S. labor force is in the midst of a generational transformation driven by unprecedented technological advances. Federal workforce policy must meet the moment by testing and scaling innovative and cutting-edge practices to ensure that workers have the skills needed to compete in a 21st-century economy.

Unfortunately, the present workforce development system does not provide adequate funding for innovative solutions, including programs that evidence shows are most effective at giving workers skills to build sustainable careers.¹ Many of these successful programs are ready and able to serve workers and communities, but remain severely underfunded.² The current landscape also lacks the funding needed to build and test new business models to meet the diverse needs of workers and employers across the country.

The Better Jobs through Evidence and Innovation Act would meet communities' employment needs by establishing the Workforce Development Innovation Fund at the U.S. Department of Labor to test and scale innovative strategies to improve employment outcomes for American workers.

The Workforce Development Innovation Fund would :

- Provide 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 effects;
- Supports a wide range of field-initiated programs and services, including but not limited to sectoral employment programs, employment social enterprises, apprenticeships, re-entry initiatives, career pathways models, industry and sector partnerships, and on-the-job or incumbent worker training.
- Make a wide array of entities eligible for funding, such as state or local workforce boards, non-governmental organizations, labor organizations, tribal organizations, and institutions of higher education.

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 (2026), "Workforce Development in the United States: Recent Trends and Evidence," *Journal of Economic Literature* 64(2): 602-36, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20251771&&from=f>.