

75TH ANNIVERSARY



SHRM Workforce Development Policy Priorities

SHRM supports policies that create opportunities for individuals to gain the skills needed to find a good job and improve their quality of life through career advancement.

Employers have struggled for months — or even years — to find qualified talent to fill millions of open jobs, and workers are looking for quality education and training programs to get the skills needed for career opportunities. To tackle these twin challenges, SHRM supports congressional action to reauthorize the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*, modernize the national apprenticeship system and expand Pell Grants to include high-quality, short-term programs.



| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA provides a range of career and training services targeting low-income adults, youth and dislocated workers through a network of one-stop career centers overseen by state and local employer-led workforce development boards. SHRM believes Congress can make WIOA work best for employers and workers by:

- Maintaining the leading role of employers with respect to workforce development boards.
- Leveraging WIOA to support the implementation of skills-based hiring by:
 - Supporting external credentialing organizations to create and validate skills tests used to earn credentials by participants in workforce development programs supported under WIOA;
 - Supporting the transparency of all credentials funded under the Act so that participants and employers know what skills they validate and how rigorous their assessments are;
 - Ensuring such information is embedded in the material included as part of the Eligible Training Provider List under WIOA; and
 - Clarifying that the required use of WIOA funds to support “business services” to employers may include services such as “human resource consultation services, including but not limited to assistance with writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks.”

| Apprenticeships

SHRM urges Congress to pass legislation to modernize and diversify the national apprenticeship system to incentivize the expansion of apprenticeships across occupations and sectors. Further, a growing number of employers have expressed a desire to implement a wide range of high quality “earn-and-learn” programs. This legislation should include ways to support such programs targeted to occupations in high-demand industries and where traditional apprenticeships have not expanded by:

- Focusing on competency-based models allowing for programs to be completed in under a year;
- Promoting the involvement of a national or multi-state employer-led intermediary to set the standards;

75TH ANNIVERSARY



SHRM Workforce Development Policy Priorities

- Providing participants with a widely recognized industry credential upon completion;
- Maintaining the health and safety standards of traditional apprenticeship programs;
- Being eligible for federal tax incentives and funding;
- Requiring a clear learning plan to be established between participants and employers, including mentoring support and wages and education benefits provided; and
- Guaranteeing participants employment with the employer upon successful completion of the program.

| Short-Term/Workforce Pell Grants

SHRM urges policymakers to support expansion of Pell Grants to cover short-term programs that are able to demonstrate successful employment and earnings outcomes. There is ample evidence demonstrating how short-term programs can assist individuals to gain the skills needed to obtain good jobs in high-demand fields.

SHRM further believes that legislation allowing for short-term programs must set a high standard of quality, allow for a diverse set of providers — including programs offered online — and not create overly bureaucratic processes for institutions and individuals.

| Our Workforce Agenda: SHRM-Supported Legislation

- **WIOA Reauthorization:** Strengthening federal support for workforce development efforts nationwide
- **Chance to Compete Act (H.R. 159):** Supporting skills-based assessment and hiring in the federal workforce
- **JOBS Act (S. 161):** Modernizing federal programs to support apprenticeships and extend Pell funds to cover short-term courses
- **Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act (S. 722 & H.R. 1477):** Revising 529 savings plans to cover postsecondary training expenses
- **National Apprenticeship Act (S. 2122):** Expanding opportunities for employers to use apprenticeship programs, especially in high-demand industries
- **Youth Apprenticeship Act (S. 2363):** Creating competitive federal grants to support apprenticeships for youth (16 to 22 years of age)
- **Gateway to Careers Act of 2023 (S. 2402):** Providing federal support for workforce training programs at community and technical colleges
- **Section 127, Employer Provided Education Assistance Benefits:** Expanding the tax exclusion for employer-provided education assistance to cover student loan repayments