

Introduction

The Texas Workforce Investment Council's *Federal Legislative Update* is published on a quarterly basis and informs stakeholders about developments in federal legislation that may impact workforce policy for Texas.



U.S. House of Representatives

Recent Highlights from Congress

Appropriations

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations bill on June 12, 2016. The bill would make widespread cuts across key workforce development programs and other education and social service programs.

The bill provides Health and Human Services funding at \$161.9 billion, \$270 million below FY 2016 levels. The bill provides a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, and as a result, several workforce and education programs would lose funding.

Funding for Department of Labor programs would be reduced by \$134 million below FY 2016 levels to \$12.04 billion, and funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) statutory formula would be reduced by \$73.8 million, or about three percent. The bill retains the full 15 percent of the Governor's Statewide Reserve.

Below are proposed funding levels in the bill for FY 2017 key workforce programs, as compared to the current fiscal year (FY 2016) funding:

Program	FY 2016 (Current)	FY 2017 (Senate)
WIOA Adult	\$815,556,000	\$782,000,000
WIOA Dislocated Worker	\$1,241,719,000	\$1,236,859,000
WIOA Youth	\$873,416,000	\$838,000,000
Wager-Peyser/ES	\$680,000,000	\$671,413,000
Apprenticeship Grants	\$90,000,000	\$1,000,000
WDQI Grants	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000
Senior Community Service Employment Program	\$434,400,000	\$400,000,000

Apprenticeship

The Department of Labor announced that \$90 million will be available this year through the ApprenticeshipUSA initiative to double and diversify the number of apprenticeships by 2018. This initiative will include:

- \$60 million to support state strategies to expand apprenticeship, including funding for regional industry partnerships and innovative strategies that diversify apprenticeship locally; and
- \$30 million to catalyze industry partnerships in fast-growing and high-tech industries, to support organizations focused on increasing diversity and to launch national efforts to make it easier for employers to start and for workers to find apprenticeship opportunities.

These funds are part of ApprenticeshipUSA, which is a coordinated effort with industry and education leaders to highlight the benefits of apprenticeship and expand the use of the earn-while-you-learn model. This initiative was designed to:

- Build a stronger national apprenticeship system;
- Encourage industry-led efforts to expand apprenticeship models in emerging high-power sectors;
- Help the development of pre-apprenticeship programs and other initiatives; and
- Help national activities that include marketing for the program.

Other Workforce-Related Legislation

The following bills were recently introduced and will continue to be monitored throughout the 114th Congress:

HR 4386 – *The Effective Apprenticeships to Rebuild National Skills Act*. This bill would authorize \$100 million in federal funding to increase access to apprenticeships across the country. The bill would promote apprenticeship and expand programs to reach more workers; increase awareness among students, parents, workers, and employers about the value of apprenticeship; and align the apprenticeship system so business, labor, postsecondary education, and workforce development can coordinate to increase the number of highly skilled workers in in-demand industries and occupations. It includes measures authorizing grants to support pre-apprenticeship programs and subsidies for employers to cover the costs of developing apprenticeships.

HR 3964 – *The Career and Technical Education Opportunity Act*. The bill would establish a pilot grant program to support career and technical education exploration programs in middle schools and high schools.

HR 5096 – *The Technical Education Creates High-Paying Careers Act*. The bill would amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to establish the American Technical Training Grant Program. The new program would provide grants to develop and expand community college technical education programs.

HR 5310 – *The Creating Higher Education Affordability Necessary to Compete Economically Act*. The bill would increase the maximum Pell grant award from \$5,815 to \$9,410; restore the so-called year-round Pell grant, allowing summer session students to receive extra grant funding; and raise the number of semesters for which a student can receive awards from 12 to 15.

HR 5360 – *The Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act*. The bill would make a series of changes to the work requirements of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) programs. The measure would require states to provide work preparation services to

SNAP recipients with children and tighten SNAP's work requirements to remove noncompliant recipients after one month. It would simplify TANF's allowable work activities and raise required work participation levels for states from 50 percent to 75 percent in 2019. The measure would define the work activity "job search" under both SNAP and TANF work requirements as "supervised job search," which would be monitored in an office location.

HR 2551 – *The Veterans Entry to Apprenticeship Act*. The bill would allow the use of veterans' education benefits as an income support for those attending pre-apprenticeship programs by treating the programs as registered apprenticeships.

HR 5380 – *The REVAMP with Community Colleges Act of 2016*. The bill would authorize a \$250 million program in fiscal year 2017 to fund competitive Department of Labor grants that help community colleges develop programs that train veterans for locally in-demand jobs.

Of Note

Vice President Biden announced the launch of 27 free community college programs and the additional investment of \$100 million for America's College Promise grants to make the connection between education and in-demand jobs. America's College Promise makes two years of community college free for nearly nine million qualifying students. Under this initiative, students must attend college part time, make satisfactory progress toward completing the program, and maintain a 2.5 GPA to be eligible for the free community college tuition. Participating community colleges must offer programs that lead to degrees and certificates for in-demand occupations, or programs that fully transfer academic credits to four-year colleges and universities.