



# JOBS AND CAREERS COALITION

**What.** A Washington-based business coalition focused on job training and workforce development.

**The context.** According to the most recent figures, 6.2 million Americans are unemployed, but 6.9 million jobs stand empty in the U.S. today because employers can't find trained people to fill them. Growing skills mismatches leave companies in many sectors – manufacturing, construction, health care and among others – desperately short of needed workers. And millions of young people leave high school and college without the training they need to find work.

**Incentives for employers to get involved.** Today more than ever, it's understood: business has a vital role to play in planning and providing career training. Just how this involvement should be structured is a topic of much discussion and experimentation. Career and technical education, partnerships between employers and community colleges, internships and apprenticeships are just some of the possibilities. What's needed in Washington: recognition of this exciting ferment – and incentives for employers and educators to take it to the next level.

**The coalition's goals.** The Jobs and Careers Coalition focuses on four core goals: to shine new light on the need for workforce training, drive a skills agenda on Capitol Hill, highlight successful state initiatives and change national perceptions of technical careers and career training.

**Our history.** The Jobs and Careers Coalition launched in 2014 to inform Congress about what employers needed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and we have been working ever since to bring the business perspective to bear on workforce issues under consideration in Washington. The coalition has worked closely with lawmakers on WIOA, the Perkins CTE Act and the Higher Education Act. We've championed apprenticeship, including unregistered apprenticeship-like earn-and-learn job training. This year, we also worked with the executive branch, highlighting the employer perspective on President Trump's executive order creating a task force to develop a new federal approach to industry-led apprenticeship programs. The coalition hosts a regular dinner series with members of Congress interested in workforce issues, and coalition members have the opportunity to participate in public events highlighting the need for skills and skills training.

**Who participates in the coalition.** Members include employers and employer associations from a broad range of industries experiencing worker shortages and skills mismatches – IT, manufacturing, construction, retail and hospitality, among others.

**Toward solutions.** This year, the coalition has been working with the Senate to get reauthorization of the Perkins Act over the finish line, working with the House on

reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and working with the Trump administration to realize its vision of industry-driven apprenticeship. We are also advancing the employer perspective on the administration's infrastructure initiative and welfare reform – both of which have implications for workforce education.

**How the coalition is structured.** Membership is open to trade associations and companies, large and small. The group meets on an as-needed basis in Washington, with telephonic access for members based beyond the beltway. A steering committee provides direction and works to build consensus on policy. Opportunity America provides administrative support.

**High stakes for the nation.** Worker shortages, skills mismatches, the need for better workforce training and better policy that creates incentives for educators and employers to collaborate on up-to-date training: all are critical issues for business. But they also hold the key to two of the most pressing challenges facing the nation: maintaining our competitive edge in an ever-changing global economy and ensuring upward mobility for Americans who will be entering the labor market in years ahead. Growing awareness of these challenges is driving new ideas among Democrats and Republicans. A top goal of the coalition: to make sure the employer voice is heard as the nation moves forward on these critical issues. The stakes could hardly be higher. It's time for Americans to recommit to skills.

## **WHAT THE COALITION DOES**

- Helps members stay abreast of emerging issues – problems and solutions
- Develops policy and provides input into pending legislation
- Builds relationships with legislative champions
- Spurs business consensus across industries
- Works to enact legislation that encourages more widespread business involvement in workforce development and career training

## **THE VALUE FOR MEMBERS**

- Facilitated Hill access
- Information sharing
- Combined multi-industry influence
- Coordinated multi-industry communications and public relations
- Enhanced access to lawmakers, including at small off-the-record Capitol Hill policy dinners\*

## **DUES**

- Steering committee           \$3,500
- Standard membership       \$1,000

*\* Attendance at policy dinners will be assessed separately*

*Opportunity America is a Washington-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility – work, skills, careers, ownership and entrepreneurship for poor and working Americans. The organization's principal activities are research, policy development, dissemination of policy ideas and working to build consensus around policy proposals.*