



# The Council of State Governments

## CSG Healthy States National Task Force Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee

### *Summary of Meeting Three, July 12, 2022*

The third meeting of the CSG Healthy States National Task Force – Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee took place during the Annual Meeting of The Council of State Governments (CSG) Southern Legislative Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. The subcommittee explored issues related to **filling workforce gaps with paid pathways to employment**, the role state governments can play in the movement to expand apprenticeships and the challenges that state leaders face in the work to increase participation in existing **apprenticeship programs**.

#### **“State Workforce Shortages: How Apprenticeships Can Build State Workforces”**

**Dina Klimkina**, Program Director for Education and Workforce projects at CSG’s Center of Innovation, presented to the subcommittee on the role apprenticeship programs can play in filling workforce gaps and offering residents a gainful career preparation alternative to traditional four-year degree programs. The talk identified the benefits apprenticeship programs bring to individuals, employers and states and highlighted some of the challenges that policymakers are seeing in their efforts to expand apprenticeships to emerging industries outside of the trades, where these programs have been traditionally used. A few highlights:

- For a job training program to count as an apprenticeship, the program must offer paid work experience, classroom instruction and award a portable credential to the participant. The best programs also feature strong employer engagement, on-the-job training, progressive wage increases, mentorship opportunities and inclusive design so that people with varying levels of physical and cognitive abilities can participate.
- There is currently \$250 million in federal government funding for the development, expansion or improvement of apprenticeships.
- While the greatest number of apprenticeships are housed in the construction, educational services and manufacturing industries, the most significant growth in apprenticeships is in home health care.
- Klimkina informed the subcommittee that state policymakers can support the expansion of apprenticeships by:
  1. Creating task forces with private sector partners to build out apprenticeship programs and evaluate how existing programs can be expanded.



2. Working with neighboring states to develop reciprocity agreements so that credentials transfer from state to state.
3. Becoming model employers through the launch of civic sector apprenticeships.

### **Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee Work Session**

Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee members met in a working session after Klimkina's presentation to discuss the content covered and brainstorm additional policy themes to consider for the subcommittee's bipartisan recommendations for improving the economic and workforce health of states. A summary of the subcommittee's conversation follows:

- Branding and recruitment difficulties exist when recruiting job seekers to existing apprenticeships. The subcommittee looked at **Missouri's** web portal as an example of an accessible and user-friendly platform that directs job seekers toward apprenticeship opportunities available to them. Additionally, it was noted that a larger rebranding effort is needed to convince the public that apprenticeships are a viable career pathway.
- The politics of credentials in certain industries where apprenticeships are present is a factor that state policymakers should be prepared to address. One takeaway from that conversation is that all stakeholders—including unions, associations and employers—should be at the table when apprenticeship programs are being developed.
- The subcommittee discussed competency-based assessments in apprenticeships—as opposed to traditional time-based assessments—and how industry professionals decide what competencies are important. It was decided more research needs to be done on this topic.
- Apprenticeships might be better utilized in states if:
  1. The mentorship component was better incentivized.
  2. Apprenticeships were more prevalent in high skills, high demand fields like law enforcement.
  3. Apprenticeships were used more in the civic sector as an on-ramp to private sector jobs.

### **Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee Policy Themes**

The Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee proposed the following policy themes as potential recommendations to consider during the final Working Session:

- Policy Theme 1: States should explore State as a Model Employer apprenticeship programs that are also public-private partnerships. For example, state governments could create a civic sector apprenticeship that educates, trains, pays and offers credentials to job seekers. Upon completion of the civic



sector apprenticeship, the graduate could be offered a job with a private sector organization partnered with the state that employs individuals with a similar skillset.

- Policy Theme 2: States should explore civic sector apprenticeships in the law enforcement career path with a particular focus on recruiting, educating, training, credentialing and employing individuals who are currently underrepresented within law enforcement.
- Policy Theme 3: State policymakers should consider ways to highlight the benefits of apprenticeship programs to youth and young adults outside school settings.
- Policy Theme 4: States should consider using continuing education credits as an incentive for industry-based mentorship. Industry professionals could count activities such as mentoring a career aspirant or hosting a job shadowing session toward continuing education requirements.
- Policy Theme 5: States should explore innovative ways to invest in pre-apprenticeship programs, particularly for adult job seekers, to increase basic literacy and numeracy among potential workers.

## Resources

- [U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships Data FY21](#) (Web Resource)
- [Missouri Apprenticeship Portal](#) (Web Resource)

## Policy Examples Highlighted by Task Force Members, Partners and Staff

- The [YouthBuild](#) program in **Alabama** offers young adults ages 16-24 classroom instruction, lab training and hands-on training at construction sites while receiving pay and supportive skills like mentoring and counseling. The program is welcoming for individuals with criminal and non-traditional education backgrounds.
- In **Delaware**, the [PIPEline to Career Success](#) program uses a multi-year professional development model that brings educational, rehabilitation and employment partners together to develop best practices for closing employment gaps for students with disabilities.
- **South Carolina's** [Apprenticeship Carolina](#) catalyzes the promotion of registered youth, adult and pre-apprenticeship programs across the state. The organization provides technical assistance on apprenticeships to employers at no cost and has helped over 42,000 apprentices graduate since 2008.
- In **Tennessee**, employers that hire apprentices can receive a [tax credit](#) equal to \$2,000 or 10 percent of the apprentice's earned wages, whichever is less.



## **Economic and Workforce Health Subcommittee**

- Sen. Melissa Hurtado (co-chair)
- Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras (co-chair)
- Rep. David Bentz, DE
- Rep. Shawn Bordeaux, SD
- Workforce Services Director Charisse Childers, AR
- Lt. Gov. Molly Gray, VT
- Rep. Leon Howard, SC
- Sen. Mary Kunesh, MN
- Sen. Fred Martin, ID
- Rep. Val Okimoto, HI
- Chief Information Officer Shawn Riley, ND
- Rep. Andy Vargas, MA

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