JULY 2026

Jobs for the Future

State Models for Effective Workforce Delivery and System Modernization

Policies and Practices That Strengthen Workforce Outcomes and Enhance Service Delivery

AT A GLANCE

This report highlights policies and practices that align and strengthen federal workforce programs – improving outcomes and enhancing service delivery, spotlighting efforts in three leading states: Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio.

AUTHORS

Taylor Maag,
Director

Susannah Rodrigue,
Senior Manager

Acknowledgments

This report was made possible through the generous support of Arnold Ventures. We are grateful to the national and state workforce leaders who shared their time, expertise, and perspectives to inform this research. In particular, we thank partners from National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and the Harvard Project on the Workforce, as well as leaders from Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Utah whose insights on workforce system design, governance, and implementation strengthened this analysis and its findings.

About JFF

Jobs for the Future (JFF) transforms U.S. education and workforce systems to drive economic success for people, businesses, and communities. www.jff.org

Contents

01. Introduction

The U.S. economy is being reshaped in real time. Employers across industries face persistent talent shortages as technology rapidly changes skill requirements and demographic shifts tighten labor supply. At the same time, workers are navigating a labor market that increasingly requires new skills and faster access to training that leads to good jobs. These pressures are not isolated—they are deeply interconnected, with direct implications for regional growth, economic mobility, and national competitiveness. Together, they underscore the growing importance of a public workforce development system that can respond quickly and deliver results at scale.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the United States connects workers and employers through training, career services, and regional partnerships. While WIOA establishes a national framework, states have broad discretion in how they implement programs, coordinate across agencies, and deliver services on the ground. As a result, workforce systems vary widely in how effectively they meet the needs of workers and employers. In the strongest cases, states are operating more integrated, demand-driven systems. In others, impact remains limited.

More than a decade after WIOA's last reauthorization, the gap between the act and current economic conditions has become increasingly apparent. Rapid technological advancement, supply chain shifts, and significant public and private investments in sectors like technology, infrastructure, and energy are accelerating demand for more responsive workforce strategies. At the same time, WIOA operates within a broader ecosystem of federally funded employment and training programs administered across multiple agencies—placing a premium on coordination, alignment, and administrative efficiency at the state level.

Recognizing these dynamics, federal leaders have taken steps toward modernizing the national workforce system, including expanded WIOA waiver authority from the U.S. Department of Labor and ongoing reauthorization efforts in the 119th Congress to pass a bipartisan, bicameral A Stronger Workforce for America Act (ASWA).[1] However, in the absence of comprehensive reform, states remain the primary drivers of innovation—using existing authorities and funds to rethink how workforce programs function and deliver results.

This brief examines how three leading states—Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio—are strengthening the effectiveness of federal workforce programs. It also spotlights Utah, a state that has gained national attention for its integrated service delivery model. Several consistent themes emerge across these case studies. High-performing states are not waiting for federal reform to modernize workforce delivery. While each state uses WIOA as a foundation, none rely on WIOA alone. Instead, they supplement federal funds with state dollars, integrate workforce and related programs to serve shared customers better, and prioritize training models tied directly to industry demand. In examining states at the forefront of workforce system innovation, this report finds that the strongest models share several common policy solutions and interventions:

Emphasis on demand-driven workforce training.

In these states, workforce strategy centers on aligning education, training, and other interventions to real labor market opportunities. While this may sound obvious, in practice, this alignment can be difficult. Today, only a modest share of WIOA participants receive occupational training, and fewer than 1% are enrolled in the "gold standard" of earn and learn models, Registered Apprenticeships, despite strong evidence that these models improve placement, retention, and earnings.[2] And while research consistently shows that sector partnerships—which convene employers within key industries to address shared talent needs—are highly effective in addressing labor shortages while simultaneously improving employment and earnings outcomes for workers, WIOA resources are too limited to take the model to scale.[3] States highlighted in this report are responding by directing resources to strategies and models that consistently yield strong labor market returns for both workers and businesses.

Integrated governance and service delivery

The public workforce development system too often is fragmented across separate programs, funding streams, and agencies. Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio have worked to reduce this fragmentation through revised governance structures, coordinated state planning, and integrated service delivery. States have braided relevant federal funds, centralized programs within one agency, and prioritized service delivery structures that make it easier for consumers to access all the resources and programs they are eligible for. These approaches make it easier for people to access multiple supports through a single system while allowing states to align resources better with need.

Robust barrier removal efforts and holistic supportive services

A consistent theme across these states is that access to training alone is not enough—workers must also be able to participate. Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio have developed innovative models to maximize the resources available to participants and treat supportive services as a core component of training and employment programs. These approaches help address barriers such as child care, transportation, and income instability that often prevent people from completing training or entering the workforce.

Data infrastructure built for continuous improvement

Federal workforce programs are designed to be outcomes-driven, but limitations in available data, interoperability, and usability can constrain how effectively those outcomes are measured, understood, and acted upon. In practice, this creates a gap between the full scope of participant progress—such as skill gains, work-based learning, or advancement along a career pathway—and what is captured in federal metrics, making it more difficult for states to demonstrate the impact of interventions. These states stand out for building robust labor market intelligence systems, performance reporting tools, and user-friendly dashboards that support faster, better decision-making. States have also expanded performance evaluation beyond federal WIOA requirements to capture the value of workforce programs better.

Strategic use of WIOA flexibility

Even under current law, states have more room to innovate than is often assumed. These states are using WIOA waivers to adapt to major economic shifts by expanding incumbent worker training, helping employers upskill current workers and prevent layoffs before displacement occurs, to simplify administration of blended Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-WIOA strategies and advance more customer-centered service delivery and stronger employer partnerships.

The case studies that follow illustrate how these strategies take shape in practice. Michigan demonstrates the value of integrated governance, strong analytics capacity, and targeted state investment to build a demand-driven workforce system. New Jersey shows how durable state funding and statutory authority, integrated service delivery, and advanced research and data capabilities can support a more outcomes-oriented system. Ohio highlights the role of administrative alignment, waiver flexibility, and employer-centered strategies in modernizing service delivery and responding to economic change. Utah, meanwhile, offers an important example of how highly integrated service delivery and shared technology infrastructure can reduce fragmentation and simplify access across workforce and human services programs.

These approaches reflect a broader shift in how states are thinking about workforce policy—not as a set of siloed programs but as a system designed to meet the needs of workers, employers, and regional economies simultaneously. For workers, this means clearer pathways to quality jobs. For employers, it means more reliable access to skilled talent. For states, it means stronger alignment between workforce investments and economic growth. Together, these examples offer a practical road map for policymakers seeking a more agile, outcomes-driven workforce system built for today's economy.

The sections that follow outline the project methodology, present state case studies, and conclude with policy takeaways for federal leaders, informed by what is working on the ground. At a moment when economic competitiveness increasingly depends on talent, these state models demonstrate that stronger workforce systems are both achievable now and essential for the future.

02. Methodology

This brief draws on a combination of desk research and stakeholder interviews with state agency leaders, national subject matter experts, and practitioners conducted between August 2025 and May 2026. Together, these methods were designed to identify how states are implementing federal workforce policy and to assess the strength, maturity, and replicability of their approaches. This mixed-methods approach provides the foundation for the comparative analysis that follows. Please see the Appendix for a more detailed overview of JFF's methodology.

03. Case Studies

Throughout this process, JFF reviewed 12 states advancing innovative approaches to workforce system modernization and effective delivery of federally funded workforce programs. While each state offered valuable lessons, Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio emerged as the three strongest case studies for this brief. This brief also highlights Utah's highly integrated approach to workforce system governance and operations—often referred to nationally as "One Door"—which offers an important example for policymakers seeking to reduce fragmentation and improve coordination across workforce and human services programs.

Michigan

Background

Decades of economic transition have shaped Michigan's workforce strategy. Today, core sectors like automotive and utilities, which make up roughly one-fifth of the state's economy, are undergoing major transformation while the state is simultaneously pivoting toward sectors like energy and infrastructure development, fundamentally changing the state's labor market. At the same time, Michigan faces critical workforce challenges: In 2024, only 51.6% of Michigan's labor force ages 25-64 had a post-high school degree, certificate, or certification, lagging behind the national average of 54.8%.[4] Twenty-six percent of households fall into the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, or ALICE category, meaning a good portion of households in the state are working but not earning enough to meet basic needs.[5]

Against this backdrop, the state deliberately chose to center its workforce development efforts on credential attainment and training that reliably lead to economic mobility and quality jobs. In 2019, Governor Whitmer set the state's Sixty by 30 goal, which aims for 60% of working-age Michiganders to earn a postsecondary credential by 2030.[6] Complementing this effort, the Statewide Workforce Plan articulates a broad, cross-agency commitment to move 75,000 households into the middle class by 2027.[7]

The Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has operationalized this vision by aligning WIOA policy, workforce investments, and service delivery around a clear statewide strategy. To support the Sixty by 30 goal, LEO requires all WIOA-funded training to lead to a recognized credential and has aligned workforce, education, and human services systems around shared economic outcomes. As a result, the state consistently leads the nation in WIOA adult credential attainment and employment rates, as well as the share of participants who receive training.[8] The case study below examines how Michigan has leveraged policy, governance, and funding strategies to advance the workforce priorities elevated throughout this report, specifically:

- **Integrated governance and service delivery,** which aligns workforce, education, and human services programs to reduce fragmentation and expand access to resources.

- **Emphasis on demand-driven training,** including employer-led training models, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeship.
- **Strategic use of WIOA flexibility,** using waivers and other federal tools to support upskilling, layoff aversion, and workforce innovation.
- **Robust barrier removal and holistic supports,** including targeted investments that help workers overcome barriers to training and employment.

Key Employment and Training Programs Within Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

- WIOA Core Programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I); Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II); Wagner-Peyser (Title III); Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)
- Career and Technical Education—Postsecondary (Perkins V Title I)
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)
- Jobs for Michigan's Graduates, the Michigan affiliate of Jobs for America's Graduates
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers outreach and monitor advocate activities
- National Farmworker Jobs Program
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Education and Training Activities
- Unemployment Insurance, including Work Share Program
- Veterans' Employment Services

Most Notable Interventions

To advance these priorities, Michigan has implemented a series of policy and programmatic interventions that align closely with the key themes elevated throughout this report. The following examples highlight practices that may inform both state replication efforts and future federal policy discussions.

1. Integrated Governance and Service Delivery

Michigan leaders have implemented an integrated governance and service delivery structure that reduces fragmentation, simplifies program access for participants, and enables flexible use of funding. LEO oversees all WIOA core programs, including Adult Education and Family Literacy (Title II) and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV), which are often administered separately in other states. It also oversees a broader set of employment, training, and economic programs, allowing the state to align resources, reduce duplication, and more effectively coordinate limited funding streams. Michigan's governance structure translates to meaningful improvements in service delivery. For example:

- **Promoting training participation and seamless co-enrollment.** Michigan's local workforce boards, known as Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs), serve as the backbone of implementation, operating not only WIOA programs but also key human services programs. For example, MWAs oversee SNAP Employment & Training, including subcontracting to providers through the 50/50 reimbursement model (see Appendix for more detail) to expand available services and training capacity where needed. Similarly, MWAs administer TANF-funded employment services known as PATH in Michigan, which include job readiness training and temporary subsidized employment opportunities.[9] Bridges, the state's digital benefits navigator, automatically refers TANF recipients to the PATH program and connects them directly with local MWAs, promoting training participation and seamless co-enrollment.

> In enacting WIOA, federal policymakers intended the one-stop delivery system to serve as a seamless access point for jobseekers to receive employment services and also obtain other services and supports to help them reach their career goals. Co-enrollment and integrated service delivery improve participant outcomes by reducing administrative burden, maximizing training opportunities, and expanding the pool of resources available to people and local workforce areas.[10]

- **Supporting sector partnerships and regional workforce collaboratives.** LEO has also strengthened alignment between workforce and economic development through close coordination with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Through this partnership, the state supports sector partnerships and regional workforce collaboratives that bring together employers, training providers, workforce boards, and jobseekers to align training with real labor market demand. By combining economic development and workforce assets, Michigan ensures that training investments are directly tied to industry needs—particularly in sectors undergoing rapid transformation, such as advanced manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure.

2. Operationalizing Demand-Driven Training

Michigan has long prioritized a demand-driven approach to workforce development, but in the current economic moment, the state has doubled down on this strategy, with a particular focus on layoff aversion and incumbent worker training. In 2024, the U.S. DOL approved requests for three key waivers related to incumbent worker training, which allow local areas in Michigan to:[11]

- Reserve up to 50% (up from the 20% allowed in statute) of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training
- Lower the minimum employer contribution for incumbent worker training to 10%, provided that said employer meets state-defined standards for job quality
- Grant more flexibility in terms of who qualifies for incumbent worker training

Taken together, these waivers reposition WIOA programs as a tool for layoff aversion and upskilling, not just reemployment services.

In addition[12] to incumbent worker training, a review of Michigan's WIOA-funded training activity across program year 2024 and program year-to-date 2025 shows a clear and consistent pattern: while the state relies on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as its primary training mechanism, work-based training represented a meaningful portion of the overall total. The combined two-year totals show 7,513 ITA-funded trainings, representing 63.6% of all WIOA-funded training, and 4,489 work-based trainings, representing 37.4% of the total.

3. State Investments to Support Barrier Removal and Industry-Aligned Training

Recognizing the limitations of federal funding, Michigan has made targeted state investments to scale effective workforce strategies, reduce barriers to program participation, and expand employer engagement. These investments allow the state to move faster and more flexibly than federal programs alone would permit. Examples of these investments include:

- **Encouraging incumbent worker training through the Going PRO Talent Fund:** This initiative, passed through Michigan's state legislature, is the state's primary fund for expanding employer-driven training. It does so by reimbursing businesses for short-term training for both incumbent workers and new hires.[13] Between 2014 and 2026, the initiative supported 8,966 businesses and more than 241,000 workers, with 91% of awards going to small- and midsize employers.[14] In fiscal year 2024 alone, Going PRO supported over 32,000 trainees, who saw average hourly wage gains of 6.2 %.[15] Recent state budget cuts to Going PRO Talent Fund have increased reliance on WIOA-funded incumbent worker training, reinforcing the importance of Michigan's recent waivers to expand IWT funds and sustain these critical employer partnerships.

- **Prioritizing holistic supports through Barrier Removal and Employment Success (BRES):** The BRES program invests heavily in flexible supportive services that enable training participation.[16] Over the past five years, the state has deployed $40 million from the state's General Fund and WIOA Governor's Reserve to support workers who fall just above eligibility thresholds for public assistance. A recent Michigan Center for Data and Analytics (MCDA) study found that participants enrolled in BRES received an average of $436 in BRES-funded supportive services and saw a median annual wage gain of $2,920—or an average of $4.60 in increased wages after one year for every $1 spent on barrier removal through BRES.[17]

- **Optimizing Use of the Governor's Reserve.** In addition to these flagship investments under Going PRO Talent Fund and BRES, Michigan utilizes funding under WIOA's Governor's Reserve to support high-impact practices, such as building the state's workforce system capacity via technical assistance and professional development, supplementing WIOA Youth funding to match need in areas with high concentrations of eligible young people, and expanding Registered Apprenticeships to reach nontraditional fields. The impact of these investments is real: In program year 24, nearly 2,700 WIOA partners received training via the Capacity Building and Professional Development (CBPD) fund, and the Governor's Reserve (blended with federal competitive grants) directly supported the enrollment of 500 new Registered Apprentices in high-demand industries across the state.[18]

4. Data and Evaluation Infrastructure for Continuous Improvement

A strong commitment to data-driven decision-making underpins all this work. The state centralized labor market information, workforce and economic data analytics, and cross-agency research under the MCDA, creating a shared infrastructure that allows agencies to operate from a common understanding of labor market conditions. This investment enables more strategic workforce planning, stronger alignment between training and demand, and more responsive service delivery.

- **Enabling real-time performance tracking.** LEO recently partnered with MCDA to launch the Workforce Development Program Dashboard, an interactive platform that draws on WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data to allow state agency staff to review and analyze outcomes in real time. Further, LEO fosters transparency and continuous improvement system-wide by issuing quarterly reports to local areas outlining their performance on WIOA metrics. These reports support both early intervention at the client level and more accurate WIOA reporting by giving MWAs the tools to validate data entries.

- **Analyzing longitudinal outcomes beyond WIOA metrics.** Importantly, Michigan has gone beyond standard federal performance metrics to understand long-term impact better. A recent five-year analysis conducted by MCDA and partner agencies found that WIOA participants experienced sustained wage growth, with average wages increasing by 26% across the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser programs over the five years observed.[19] Further, wages increased by 34% for participants who were unemployed upon initial registration.[20] These findings provide a clearer picture of return on investment and reinforce the state's focus on quality employment outcomes.

Michigan demonstrates that states can build a high-performing, demand-driven workforce system within current federal constraints. However, doing so requires integrated governance, strategic use of flexibility, strong data infrastructure, and substantial state investment.

New Jersey

Background

A strong but evolving economic landscape shapes New Jersey's workforce strategy. The state has experienced steady job growth and benefits from a highly diversified economy, with strengths in sectors like health care, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. At the same time, high cost of living places pressure on workers to access jobs that offer sustainable wages and opportunities for career advancement. Looking ahead, job growth is expected to concentrate in a narrower set of industries that increasingly require postsecondary education and specialized skills. These dynamics have pushed state leaders to focus on connecting people to jobs and ensuring those jobs support long-term economic mobility and align with employer demand.

In response, New Jersey goes beyond federal requirements by using state policy to support dedicated funding and strong research and data capacity. This approach prioritizes training models closely tied to labor market demand and demonstrating strong returns in employment and wage gains, including apprenticeship, work-based learning, and industry partnerships that connect people directly to career pathways in high-growth sectors. These priorities have been reinforced by the Governor's Future of Work Task Force, which underscores the importance of lifelong learning, employer engagement, and coordinated workforce strategies.[21]

To support these activities, New Jersey has established dedicated workforce training levies to provide a stable source of funding to pilot new approaches, scale proven strategies, and sustain workforce priorities across economic and political cycles, which was made possible through strong legislative engagement. This, coupled with the state's commitment to research and evaluation, has enabled the state to move beyond compliance and build a workforce system that is increasingly integrated, data-driven, and responsive to changing labor market needs. As highlighted throughout this report, New Jersey's workforce system is particularly notable for its emphasis on:

- **Demand-driven workforce training,** including apprenticeship, work-based learning, and sector partnerships that align training investments with employer demand.

- **Integrated governance and service delivery,** using co-enrollment, functional alignment, and coordinated workforce programs to improve participant access and outcomes.
- **Data infrastructure and continuous improvement,** using advanced labor market information, provider performance reporting, and evaluation tools to strengthen accountability and inform decision-making.

Key Employment and Training Programs Within New Jersey's Department of Labor & Workforce Development

- WIOA Core Programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I); Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II); Wagner-Peyser (Title III); Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)
- Labor Market Information & Reporting/Evaluation Research
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Unemployment Insurance
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program
- Veterans' Employment Services

Most Notable Interventions

To advance these priorities, New Jersey has implemented a series of policy and programmatic interventions that align closely with the key themes identified throughout this report. The following examples highlight practices that may inform both state workforce reforms and future federal policy considerations.

1. Durable Funding and Statutory Foundations

New Jersey treats workforce development as a shared responsibility between employers and workers, using small payroll assessments to generate stable, dedicated funding outside of the annual appropriations process. This approach provides a consistent resource base to invest in workforce priorities, test new strategies, and sustain reforms over time. These funds are designed to complement, not duplicate, WIOA by supporting research, innovation, and scaling proven models. New Jersey's payroll taxes support two flagship initiatives.

New Jersey uses small payroll contributions from both workers and employers that generate stable, dedicated funding for workforce development activities. Many peer nations have adopted a similar approach, e.g., the United Kingdom's Pay Apprenticeship Levy.[22]

- **Filling Funding Gaps Through the Workforce Development Partnership Fund (WDPF):** Established under the New Jersey Employment and Workforce Development Act, the WDPF finances customized training, apprenticeships, sector partnerships, and evaluation activities.[23] Its flexibility enables the state to identify gaps in service and respond quickly. For example, when data showed that certain youth populations were underserved, the state blended WIOA and WDPF dollars to launch the Bridges to Employing Youth program and expand summer youth employment opportunities.[24]
- **Prioritizing Worker Preparedness Through the Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills (SWFBS):** Enacted under P.L.2001, c.152, this initiative complements WDPF by focusing on job readiness and foundational skills such as adult literacy, English language learning, and digital literacy.[25] This fund is especially critical in New Jersey, where demand for adult basic education and literacy services often exceeds capacity provided through the WIOA system.

2. Emphasis on Employer-Driven Training

New Jersey has deliberately prioritized training models with strong evidence of labor market returns, particularly employer-driven strategies such as work-based learning, Registered Apprenticeship, and sector partnerships. This reflects a shift from funding training broadly to investing in models that consistently lead to employment and wage gains.

Per U.S. DOL data, New Jersey saw 133% growth in new apprentices between Fiscal Year 2016 and FY2025—nearly double the national growth rate of 69% over that same period.[26] Completion rates also exceed national benchmarks. According to U.S. DOL's Apprentice Completion Rate Analysis, 66.8% of New Jersey-based apprentices completed their programs in FY2024, significantly outpacing the national average of 46.5%.[27]

- **Expanding high-quality work-based learning through additional state investment:** Since 2018, the state has invested over $100 million to expand its apprenticeship ecosystem, resulting in 918 new programs (a 150% increase) and the onboarding of 25,608 new apprentices.[28] New Jersey's growth in apprenticeship participation has significantly outpaced the national average, and completion rates exceed national benchmarks. The state cites two flagship initiatives that supported this expansion: the Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) program, which focuses on barrier reduction models and job readiness training, with the goal of increasing participation among populations historically underrepresented in apprenticeships, and the Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) program, which incentivizes employers to develop and scale apprenticeship opportunities in high-growth industries that have not traditionally used the model.[29]

- **Advancing employer engagement through sector partnerships:** New Jersey also advances industry-aligned career pathways through sector partnerships. The state's Industry Partnerships team, established by the legislature and funded by WDPF, cultivates public-private partnerships to address shared workforce challenges.[30] These partnerships have supported the development of new training pathways in emerging industries, such as biomanufacturing and battery storage. By aligning training investments directly with employer demand, the state ensures that workforce programs respond to economic shifts and produce meaningful outcomes for participants.

3. Modernizing Service Delivery Through Co-Enrollment

New Jersey is actively reorienting its workforce system around the needs of the learner/worker rather than the structure of individual programs. At the center of this effort is co-enrollment and integrated service delivery, creating a single, coordinated entry point that reduces administrative burden, maximizes training opportunities, and expands the pool of resources available to people for employment services alongside the broader supports needed to reach their career goals.

- **Implementing a "functional alignment" model that organizes one-stop staff around core activities such as intake, assessment, and career coaching rather than assigning staff to specific programs.** This reduces duplication, expands service capacity, and allows staff to focus on helping people navigate career interventions that are best for them. The state's WIOA plan and subsequent guidance further reinforce this approach by prioritizing shared intake processes, comprehensive assessments, and coordinated service delivery across programs.[31]

- **Encouraging greater alignment between Unemployment Insurance (UI) and WIOA**: Unemployment Insurance and the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program serve as key entry points into New Jersey's broader workforce system.[32] State policy requires co-enrollment between RESEA and WIOA Title I, ensuring that people receiving reemployment services are also connected to training and supportive services where appropriate.[33]

4. Strong Research and Data Infrastructure to Advance Accountability

New Jersey stands out for its work in prioritizing research and building strong data infrastructure. NJDOL has played a critical role in supporting these goals by elevating the position of its Labor Market Information (LMI) office and Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI). Additionally, NJDOL's position as the administrator of the Unemployment Insurance system and associated wage records enables robust tracking of long-term employment outcomes and provider performance. In order to support greater public access to the data and stronger accountability metrics, New Jersey has done the following:

- **Transforming career navigation via My Career NJ:** Launched in 2024, this consumer-facing digital resource hub integrates personalized career navigation, training program information, and real-time labor market data to support informed decision-making by students and jobseekers.[34]

- **Enhancing outcomes data through WIOA's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL):** In 2021, New Jersey restructured its consumer outcomes reporting mechanism to mirror the College Scorecard, consolidating ETPL reporting into one Quality Assurance Scorecard, which evaluates providers across five categories: education outcomes, employment and wage outcomes , labor market demand, and cost-financial impact.

- **Taking a more comprehensive look at individual outcomes:** To ensure fair evaluation of training providers, NJDOL will soon launch a statistical adjustment methodology that accounts for participant demographic characteristics. This approach addresses a key flaw in WIOA. While funding is intended to support people who face significant barriers to employment, performance metrics penalize local boards for failing to meet high job placement rates and wage increases. By adjusting for service populations, the state reduces incentives for "creaming" (i.e., selection bias that focuses resources on jobseekers who are most likely to succeed) and better aligns performance accountability with WIOA's statutory intent.

- **Pursuing enhanced wage records.** State legislators recently introduced a bill, S3948, that would expand reporting requirements for New Jersey's UI wage records to include job titles, primary work location, date of birth, and pay rate.[35] These changes would advance accountability, allow more robust evaluation studies, and support NJDOL strategic enforcement initiatives.

New Jersey's workforce interventions demonstrate how states can move beyond WIOA compliance to build a more integrated, data-driven, and outcomes-oriented system. The state has used legislative authority, dedicated funding, and strong data infrastructure to ensure workforce investments are aligned with economic demand and produce measurable results.

Ohio

Background

A tightening labor market and a rapidly changing economy have shaped Ohio's workforce strategy. Major investments from companies such as Intel and Honda are increasing demand for skilled workers in advanced manufacturing, technology, and the skilled trades, while demographic trends continue to constrain labor supply. The state has experienced a steady decline in labor force participation over the past decade and a half, alongside an aging population and a significant number of "underutilized" workers—people who are working part-time for economic reasons or only marginally attached to the labor force.[36] Together, these trends place real constraints on economic growth and heighten the urgency of expanding and better utilizing the state's workforce system.

In response, Ohio has prioritized two complementary goals: increasing labor force participation, particularly among younger workers, and ensuring that workforce investments align closely with employer demand. The state has emphasized work-based learning and early workforce engagement to connect youth to career pathways while also investing in employer-driven training models to help businesses upskill current workers and meet evolving talent needs. These priorities are reflected in state policy decisions, including refined criteria for "in-demand" jobs that prioritize occupations paying at least 80% of the state's median wage and requirements that the majority of WIOA-funded training aligns with those occupations.[37]

To advance these goals, Ohio has built a workforce system grounded in administrative alignment and pragmatic use of available policy tools. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) oversees a broad portfolio of workforce and human services programs, enabling coordinated policymaking, braided funding, and a more seamless customer experience across programs. Combined with strategic use of WIOA waivers and targeted state investments, this structure has allowed Ohio to modernize service delivery and respond quickly to evolving labor market needs. The policy interventions highlighted in this report demonstrate how Ohio has used these strengths to build a more responsive workforce system, particularly in the following areas:

- **Integrated governance and service delivery,** aligning workforce and human services programs to expand access to resources, improve coordination, and reduce fragmentation.
- **Demand-driven workforce training,** prioritizing employer engagement, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, and sector partnerships that connect workforce investments to labor market demand.
- **Strategic use of WIOA flexibility,** using waivers and other administrative tools to expand training opportunities, streamline service delivery, and support innovative approaches to workforce development.decision-making.

Key Employment and Training Programs Within Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)

- WIOA Core Programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I); Wagner-Peyser (Title III)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Education and Training Activities
- Unemployment Insurance
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program
- Labor Market Information
- Child Care and Child Support Programs
- Veterans' Employment Services
- ApprenticeshipOhio
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Services

Most Notable Interventions

To advance these priorities, Ohio has implemented a series of policy and programmatic interventions that align closely with the key themes highlighted throughout this report. The following examples highlight strategies that strengthen employer engagement, expand workforce participation, and improve service delivery.

1. Integrated Service Delivery: Youth and Human Services Alignment

While WIOA emphasizes integrated service delivery across workforce and human services programs, few states have fully operationalized this vision at scale. Ohio stands out for doing so, particularly in how it serves young people and people facing barriers to employment. Some examples of how Ohio is undertaking alignment and systems integration include the following:

- **Blending WIOA Youth and TANF resources through the** Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program **(CCMEP):** In 2016, through the state's operating budget, it passed CCMEP. Rather than requiring young people to navigate multiple programs, CCMEP creates a unified service model, providing young people across the state with coordinated case management, education, training, paid work experience, and supportive services through one system. This approach reduces fragmentation and expands access to the full range of services young people need to support long-term success.

- **Using WIOA waivers to support system integration:** Ohio has used WIOA waivers as a practical tool to make its integrated youth model work at scale. At a basic level, these waivers allow the state to more easily combine funding for WIOA and TANF—two programs that typically operate separately—into a single, coordinated approach. For example, Ohio received approval to count TANF-supported participants toward WIOA requirements for serving out-of-school youth and to manage those requirements at the state level rather than across multiple local areas. These changes reduce administrative complexity and make it easier for local providers to deliver services through one system. The impact is notable: in program year 2023, 5,353 participants were co-funded with TANF dollars, up from 4,821 the prior year, with co-enrollment rates continuing to rise.[38]

  Ohio has also used waivers to expand access to training and work-based learning for youth. Flexibilities allowing ITAs for in-school youth and permitting TANF funds to count toward WIOA work experience requirements have increased youth participation in on-the-job training in high-demand occupations. Youth ITA use grew from 841 in program year 20 to 1,344 in PY23, reflecting the state's broader shift toward earlier workforce engagement.[39] Together, these waivers do more than simplify administration; they also expand the pool of resources available to each participant, enabling more comprehensive service delivery and stronger connections to employment.

- **Piloting efforts to scale TANF-WIOA alignment:** Building on Ohio's work in using TANF funds to support youth education, training, and employment efforts in the state, Ohio was also selected to participate in the national TANF pilot authorized under the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. The pilot (running until 2031) allows states to test alternative approaches to measuring the TANF Work Participation Rate, an important signal that federal policymakers recognize existing metrics may not fully capture meaningful engagement in education, training, and employment activities.

2. Employer Engagement and Incumbent Worker Upskilling

As Ohio works to respond to a tightening labor market and major industry investments, strengthening employer engagement and expanding incumbent worker training have become central to the state's workforce strategy. These approaches allow the state to meet two critical goals at once: helping employers access the skilled workforce they need to grow while enabling workers to build new skills and advance without leaving the labor market. In a context where the existing workforce must do more to support economic growth, upskilling current workers and aligning training with real job demand are essential.

- **Strengthening employer-facing infrastructure through the Business Resource Network:** Originally launched at the local level and scaled statewide with a $6 million U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund award, the model brings together workforce boards, chambers of commerce, and economic development partners to better coordinate outreach and increase employer use of workforce services.[40] Since 2021, ODJFS has reinforced this approach through a dedicated subgrant, providing flexible state funding to expand business services capacity across all 20 local workforce areas. In Program Year 2023, the state invested $4.5 million to support these efforts, helping shift the system toward a more coordinated and responsive employer engagement model.[41]

- **Raising the bar for in-demand credentials:** Ohio has paired its employer engagement efforts with clearer expectations around training quality and labor market alignment. State policy requires that 85% of WIOA-funded ITA enrollments be tied to occupations on the state's in-demand list—jobs that meet wage and growth criteria—while the remaining 15% can reflect regional priorities.[42] This approach ensures that most public training dollars are directed toward opportunities that offer strong wages and advancement potential, reinforcing the state's broader focus on outcomes rather than participation alone.

- **Targeting state investments to rapidly respond to employer demand through TechCred:** Ohio's TechCred program, which state legislation created, illustrates how targeted state investment can rapidly respond to employer demand and support incumbent worker upskilling. The program provides reimbursements of up to $2,000 per credential for short-term, technology-focused training, with employers eligible for up to $30,000 per round and $180,000 annually.[43] Designed to be flexible and easy to access, TechCred enables businesses of all sizes to quickly train both current and prospective workers in skills aligned with evolving industry needs. The scale of the program reflects its impact: A single round in September awarded nearly $14 million to support over 10,500 credentials across 833 employers.[44] TechCred has become a widely watched model because it is employer-driven, administratively simple, and tightly aligned with real-time labor market demand.

- **Aligning employer engagement through the Industry Sector Partnership (ISP) Grant Program:** Ohio has made a deliberate investment in sector partnerships as a way to organize employer engagement and align workforce efforts with the state's broader economic priorities. Since 2019, the state legislature has appropriated $17.6 million to support 64 regional collaboratives through the ISP Grant Program.[45] This competitive program is designed to meet partnerships where they are: "Spark Grants" provide seed funding to emerging partnerships, while "Accelerant Grants" help more established partnerships expand their reach and impact. Both require significant employer and partner investment, ranging from a two-to-one to one-to-one funding match, ensuring that these partnerships are employer-driven and grounded in real industry demand.

  The state has paired these investments with federal resources to scale sector-based strategies in high-growth industries. For example, Ohio has launched a statewide broadband sector partnership to connect workers to jobs created by infrastructure investments. It has also supported the "Charged Up" initiative to build career pathways in electric vehicle manufacturing, aligning training with major private-sector investments in the state.

Ohio demonstrates how states can use administrative alignment and targeted investments to modernize workforce systems within existing federal frameworks. By focusing on integration, employer demand, and practical implementation, the state has built a system that is more responsive to both workers and businesses.

Utah

Utah offers one of the nation's strongest examples of a highly integrated workforce and human services system. The Utah Department of Workforce Services has administered WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SNAP, child care, Unemployment Insurance, and related programs under one agency since 1995. Due to an exception in WIOA and its predecessor, WIA, Utah also operates as a single-area state, enabling consistent statewide implementation.

The state's technology infrastructure—all built in-house—is essential to this integration. Its case management system, called UWORKS, supports both self-service and staff-assisted users. UWORKS interacts seamlessly with other state data collection systems and tools to determine eligibility for supportive services, capture all funding sources and training activities in one place, and streamline performance reporting for administrators and staff.

As a result, what federal leaders have coined as the "One Door" approach allows residents to access multiple workforce and benefit programs through a common intake process and coordinated case management system—reducing fragmentation and improving co-enrollment. Utah demonstrates how consolidated governance and shared data systems can:

- Simplify customer navigation across programs
- Improve coordination between workforce and human services
- Reduce administrative burden
- Support broader access to training and supportive services

Examples include a statewide referral system, rural outreach efforts, and the Upward Mobility Program, which helps TANF-eligible families cover housing and utility costs while participating in education or training.

State leaders say this model has helped Utah recover following the pandemic. Utah's employment-to-population ratio exceeded the national average by 4.2 percentage points.[46] That gap has since widened to 7.3 percentage points—one of the strongest post-COVID recoveries in the nation.[47] Within WIOA, the state enrolls a relatively high share of participants in training compared to national averages. At the same time, other WIOA performance indicators are generally in line with national benchmarks.

Utah is a valuable model for states and federal leaders exploring how stronger system alignment and technology infrastructure can improve service delivery. It also highlights the need to pair streamlined access with accountability systems that drive strong training, credential, and employment outcomes.

04. Federal Policy Takeaways and Considerations

While national debates frequently focus on what Congress or federal agencies should do next, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Utah, and other leading states are already demonstrating how federal workforce programs can be implemented more effectively. This brief showcases that high-performing systems are not built through compliance alone but through deliberate policy choices that make public programs work better for workers, employers, and communities.

These findings also arrive at a consequential moment for federal policymakers. As Congress continues efforts to reauthorize WIOA and federal agencies explore administrative modernization, the field does not need to start from scratch. States have already tested many of the reforms under discussion, from stronger alignment across programs and smarter accountability systems to expanded employer-driven training, modern data infrastructure, and more flexible service delivery models. Federal leaders should learn from what is already working on the ground to create conditions for more states to replicate success by prioritizing the following strategies in WIOA reauthorization:

Invest in workforce development at a level commensurate with its importance to the national interest.

Across leading states, each has benefited from considerable state investment in workforce development. However, variation in state budgets and shifting economic conditions render that approach unstable at best and impossible for more resource-constrained states. The United States invests far less in talent development compared to other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.[48] The U.S. would have to invest an additional $30 billion in employment assistance alone to meet the OECD average of .11% of GDP .[49] A skilled workforce is essential to productivity growth and overall economic competitiveness.[50] As technological advances reshape the labor market, policymakers must invest in skills development to ensure the U.S. has the talent pipelines necessary to enable private sector success.

Scale evidence-based models that align with U.S. economic growth priorities

States highlighted in this report have taken steps to expand employer-driven training and strategies that drive sustained employer engagement to inform state and regional workforce activities. These state investments in sector-based talent initiatives evince broad consensus that the model works—beyond connecting the supply and demand sides of the economy, it creates durable public-private infrastructure through which employers can co-design solutions, validate training relevance, and invest time, resources, and hiring opportunities into the workforce system. Federal leaders should expand pathways to use WIOA and related programs for these types of interventions via dedicated funding, statutory requirements, and incentives that reward sustained employer participation. If the goal is both economic mobility and business competitiveness, public funding should consistently support models that connect learning to real work and evolving labor market demand.

De-silo federal employment and training programs.

Efforts like New Jersey's functional alignment model, Ohio's braiding and blending of TANF and WIOA resources to serve those with barriers to employment, and Michigan's centralized approach to administrating WIOA, TANF, and SNAP E&T make it easier for people to access multiple supports through a single system. However, states remain constrained by federal program silos. Federal policymakers should better align eligibility rules, reporting structures, and performance metrics across WIOA and related workforce and human services programs. Stronger alignment would allow states to spend less time navigating compliance requirements and more time delivering results for workers and employers.

Prioritize supportive services and barrier removal

Another consistent theme across the four states highlighted in this brief is that barrier reduction is key to individual success. Michigan created a dedicated, flexible funding stream to expand system capacity, while Utah integrated its human services and workforce systems to unlock complementary funding streams. Federal policy should better support these efforts by expanding flexibility to fund supportive services, encouraging co-enrollment across programs to meet people's needs holistically, and addressing challenges like "cliff effects" that disincentivize employment and career progression.[51] Without these supports, even the best training programs will fall short of their intended impact.

Strengthen data infrastructure, evaluation capacity, and accountability mechanisms.

Strong workforce systems increasingly depend on strong data and accountability systems. While states like New Jersey and Michigan have made great strides in modernizing data systems, many states and local areas still lack the infrastructure to use data effectively in real time. Federal and state leaders should prioritize integrated case management systems, longitudinal data systems, and accessible dashboards that return actionable insights to practitioners and participants alike. At the same time, accountability systems should evolve to capture long-term outcomes better, progress along career pathways, and the value of integrated service delivery. Strengthening both data and accountability will allow workforce systems to more accurately measure success, incentivize what works, and better serve workers, employers, and regional economies.

Evaluate state applications of WIOA waiver authority and codify what works.

Michigan, Ohio, and New Jersey have leveraged waivers to advance workforce priorities. But these examples also reveal the limits of governing through waivers and administrative workarounds. States should not need exceptional capacity or constant federal approvals to modernize approaches to meet the economic realities in their state. Federal reauthorization of WIOA, paired with adequate funding, remains necessary to scale what works nationally. U.S. DOL's recent expansion of WIOA waiver authority offers policymakers an opportunity to study what works and codify flexibilities.

Taken together, these lessons point to a set of actionable policy considerations for federal and state leaders seeking to strengthen workforce systems at scale. Finally, this brief underscores that states should not wait for Washington, DC, to act. Even within current statutes, governors, legislatures, workforce agencies, and local leaders have meaningful tools to improve delivery, braid resources, and pilot new models that better meet the needs of workers and employers. The playbook is already emerging in the states. What comes next is scaling what works to build a more agile, competitive, and inclusive economy.

05. Appendix

Key Federal Workforce Programs

Program Name	Administering Agency/Agencies	Description and Purpose
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	U.S. Department of Labor (WIOA Titles I, II, and V) U.S. Department of Education (WIOA Titles II and IV)	WIOA is the nation's primary federal workforce development statute. WIOA has a "dual mandate," meaning it was designed to serve two entities: jobseekers and employers. The law includes five titles: • Workforce Development Activities (Title I) includes the WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, and WIOA Youth formula grant programs, as well as Job Corps and a variety of national programs. • Adult Education and Literacy (Title II) supports educational services for adults who require English language literacy or other basic skills development for success in the labor market. • Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services (Title III) establishes Employment Services as an integral part of the one-stop delivery system to provide WIOA clients with workforce and labor market information, career counseling, and job search and placement support, among other activities. • Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) provides employment and independent living services to people with disabilities. • General Provisions (Title V) focuses on provisions for the administration of WIOA.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	TANF is a formula grant program focused on low-income families. Funds flow from federal government to states, territories, and tribes as a "block grant," meaning they receive a fixed, lump sum each year (based on 1996 allocations) and have broad discretion over fund allocation and eligibility. While TANF is known primarily for providing cash assistance to low-income families, it also aims to promote financial stability and self-sufficiency through job readiness and employment.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)	U.S. Department of Agriculture	SNAP E&T falls within the larger federal food assistance program, called SNAP. The purpose of SNAP E&T is to assist SNAP recipients in attaining the skills, training, or work experience needed to secure and sustain long-term employment. SNAP E&T can be a strong complement to WIOA programs in terms of its flexibility to fund supportive services. However, the program is administratively complex, and the reimbursement-based model for training activities makes it difficult for resource-constrained local boards and training providers to leverage the fund effectively. Funds are allocated via two main grants: • "100%" formula grant to states for program administration and operation • "50/50" reimbursement fund, which uses federal dollars to reimburse states for 50% of the costs of providing E&T services.
Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)	U.S. Department of Education	Perkins V is the primary federal law funding the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) programs. Funds are allocated to states primarily via formula grants that account for poverty and population.
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	U.S. Department of Labor	Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a joint state-federal program that provides temporary financial assistance to qualifying unemployed workers while they seek work. The chief evaluation office works with the Employment & Training Administration's Office of Unemployment Insurance to conduct studies of UI programs that can help Department of Labor program administrators, as well as policymakers, states, employers, and workers, to understand various facets of these programs.[52]
Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)	U.S. Department of Labor	The Unemployment Insurance (UI) system is a required partner of the broader public workforce system, and the RESEA program was established to help one-stop delivery centers address the individual reemployment needs of UI claimants, helping them reenter the labor force as quickly as possible. State participation is optional, though the majority of states and territories do participate.

Endnotes

1 Taylor Maag and Susannah Rodrigue, "New WIOA Waiver Flexibility Opens a Window for Workforce Reform," Jobs for the Future, January 15, 2026, https://www.jff.org/blog/new-wioa-waiver-flexibility-opens-a-window-for-workforce-reform/; "JFF Calls on Congress to Pass Promising WIOA Bill," Jobs for the Future, effective December 9, 2024, https://www.jff.org/jff-calls-on-congress-to-pass-promising-wioa-bill/.

2 John D. Sawyer, Apprenticeship: Earn-And-Learn Opportunities Can Benefit Workers and Employers (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, April 28, 2025), https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107040; Taylor Maag, Vanessa Bennett, and Susannah Rodrigue, Policy Blueprint to Modernize & Expand Apprenticeship Nationwide (Boston, Massachusetts: Jobs for the Future, April 29, 2025), https://www.jff.org/idea/policy-blueprint-to-modernize-expand-apprenticeship-nationwide/.

3 Lawrence F. Katz et al., "Why Do Sectoral Employment Programs Work? Lessons from WorkAdvance," Journal of Labor Economics 40, no. S1 (April 2022), https://doi.org/10.1086/717932; "Sectoral Employment Programs as a Path to Quality Jobs: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations," Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/sectoral-employment-programs-path-quality-jobs-lessons-randomized-evaluations; Harry J. Holzer, "Should the Federal Government Spend More on Workforce Development?" Brookings Institution, May 23, 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/should-the-federal-government-spend-more-on-workforce-development/.

4 "A Stronger Nation: Educational Attainment in Michigan," Lumina Foundation, accessed June 12, 2026, https://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/attainment/michigan.

5 Michigan Association of United Ways and United for ALICE, The State of ALICE in Michigan (Cedar Knolls, New Jersey: United for ALICE, 2025), https://www.unitedforalice.org/introducing-ALICE/michigan.

6 "Sixty by 30," Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/higher-education/sixty-by-30.

7 Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Achievement, and Potential, The Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan (Lansing, Michigan: LEO, MEDC, MDLEAP, n.d.), https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Documents/MWDB/MI-State-Workforce-Plan.pdf.

8 Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Michigan Annual Performance Report Narrative: Program Year 2024, (Lansing, Michigan: Michigan LEO, 2025), https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Documents/WD/Public-Notices/LEO-WD-PY24-WIOA-Annual-Report-Narrative.pdf.

9 "PATH," Health & Human Services, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/cash/path.

10 "WIOA Co-Enrollment Cohort - Lessons Learned," Workforce GPS, accessed June 17, 2026, https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2018/06/21/15/09/WIOA-Co-Enrollment-Cohort-Lessons-Learned.

11 "Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)," Workforce GPS, accessed June 17, 2026, https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/05/08/15/08/Incumbent-Worker-Training-IWT; "Letter to Gretchen Whitmer," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/wioa/pdfs/Signed%20MI%202024%20Waiver%20Response%20Letter%20and%20Incoming.pdf.

12 Annual Performance Report Narrative, https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Documents/WD/Public-Notices/LEO-WD-PY24-WIOA-Annual-Report-Narrative.pdf.

13 "Going PRO Talent Fund," LEO, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/wd/programs-services/going-pro-talent-fund.

14 "Going PRO," https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/wd/programs-services/going-pro-talent-fund.

15 "Going PRO Talent Fund Dashboard: Fiscal Year 2024," Michigan.gov, accessed May 28, 2026, https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Documents/WD/Industry_Businesses/Talent-Fund/Dashboards/Going-PRO-Talent-Fund-FY24-Dashboard.pdf?rev=a3a49ad7361547c39eb3b5f5b99fac67&hash=960C001ED58DAD5246B9430722C1B62C.

16 "Barrier Removal and Employment Success (BRES)," LEO, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/wd/programs-services/barrier-removal-and-employment-success-program.

17 Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, BRES ROI Study, 2026.

18 Annual Performance Report Narrative, https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Documents/WD/Public-Notices/LEO-WD-PY24-WIOA-Annual-Report-Narrative.pdf.

19 Longitudinal analysis of Michigan state administrative data and WIOA performance data, conducted by the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, 2025.

20 Longitudinal analysis of Michigan state administrative data and WIOA performance data.

21 "Future of Work Task Force," Official Site of the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Innovation Authority, accessed June 19, 2026, https://innovation.nj.gov/projects/fow-task-force/.

22 "Pay Apprenticeship Levy," Gov.uk, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy.

23 "ASSEMBLY, No. 2413, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, 222nd LEGISLATURE," New Jersey Legislature, accessed June 12, 2026, https://pub.njleg.gov/Bills/2026/A2500/2413_I1.HTM#:~:text=An%20Act%20concerning%20the%20promotion%20of%20apprenticeships,in%20the%20State%20and%20amending%20P.L.1992%2C%20c.43.

24 "NJDOL Announces $3.6M in Grant Funds to Promote Work Opportunities for Special Populations of Youth," New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/press/2024/20240111_bridges.shtml; U.S. Department of Labor, *WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative: National Summary and Highlights for Program Year 2024* (Washington, DC: Employment and Training Administration, 2024), https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/Performance/pdfs/PY2024/Quick%20View%20WIOA%20Annual%20Statewide%20Performance%20Report%20Narrative%20for%20Titles%20I%20and%20III%20Program%20Year%202024_.pdf.

25 "CHAPTER 152," New Jersey Legislature, June 12, 2026, http://pub.njleg.gov/bills/2000/PL01/152_.HTM.

26 "Apprentices by State," Apprenticeship.gov, accessed March 15, 2026, https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-

and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard.

27 “Apprentice Completion Rate Analysis,” Apprenticeship.gov, accessed March 15, 2026, https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/completion-rate-analysis.

28 *New Jersey Business Magazine*, “NJDOL Announces $8M in Grants to Support Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs,” September 30, 2025, https://njbmagazine.com/njb-news-now/njdol-announces-8m-in-grants-to-support-apprenticeship-and-pre-apprenticeship-programs/.

29 “2025 New Jersey Revised Statutes: Title 34 - Labor and Workmen's Compensation Section 34:15D-29 - Talent Network Program.," JUSTIA U.S. Law, accessed June 12, 2026,” https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/title-34/section-34-15d-29/.

30 “2025 New Jersey Revised Statutes: Title 34 - Labor and Workmen's Compensation Section 34:15D-29 - Talent Network Program.," JUSTIA U.S. Law, accessed June 12, 2026,” https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/title-34/section-34-15d-29/.

31 “New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice,” New Jersey Department of Labor, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.nj.gov/labor/assets/PDFs/WIOA/documents/resources/WD-PY24-8%20Service%20Integration%20and%20Co-Enrollment%20Policy%20(6-3-25).pdf.

32 “Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Grants,” U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/american-job-centers/RESEA.

33 “Workforce Innovation Notice,” https://www.nj.gov/labor/assets/PDFs/WIOA/documents/resources/WD-PY24-8%20Service%20Integration%20and%20Co-Enrollment%20Policy%20(6-3-25).pdf.

34 “NJ Training Explorer,” My Career NJ, accessed June 12, 2026, https://mycareer.nj.gov/training.

35 “Bill S3948, Session 2026 - 2027,” New Jersey Legislature, accessed June 12, 2026, https://njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2026/S3948/bill-text?f=S4000&n=3948_I1.

36 “OHIO PYS 2024-2027 Modification,” Ohio, accessed June 12, 2026, https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/v1769191337/jfs.ohio.gov/owd/Modification_Draft_Ohio_PYs_2024-2027.pdf.

37 “Ohio In-Demand Jobs List Updated, Interactive Feature Launched,” Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, effective December 11, 2019, https://workforce.ohio.gov/news/121019.

38 “Public Comment,” https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/v1769191337/jfs.ohio.gov/owd/Modification_Draft_Ohio_PYs_2024-2027.pdf, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS), *Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program Performance Report: Program Year 2023 ADJUSTED Annual* (Columbus, Ohio: ODJFS, 2024), https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/owd/CCMEP/CCMEP-PY-2023-Annual-ADJUSTED-Performance-Report.pdf.

39 Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS), *WIOA Title I Performance Report: Program Year 2023 ADJUSTED Annual* (Columbus, Ohio: ODJFS, 2024), https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WIOA/WIOA-PY-2023-Annual-ADJUSTED-Performance-Report.pdf.

40 “Sen. Brown Announces $6 Million for SECTORS-Based Workforce Training,” Richland Source, effective September 30, 2015, https://www.richlandsource.com/2015/09/30/sen-brown-announces-6-million-for-sectors-based-workforce-training/.

41 “State Funding to Local Areas Will Help Employers Recruit Skilled Workers,” Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, accessed June 19, 2026, https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/RELEASES/State%20Funding%20to%20Local%20Areas%20Will%20Help%20Employers%20Recruit%20Skilled%20Workers.pdf.

42 “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No. 15-11.3,” Ohio, effective September 27, 2021, https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL_15-11.3_-_Use_of_Individual_Training_Accounts.pdf.

43 “TechCred?,” https://techcred.ohio.gov.

44 “TechCred?,” https://techcred.ohio.gov/.

45 “Ohio Industry Sector Partnership Grant (ISP) Program Guidelines FY’26, Round 6,” Ohio Department of Development, accessed June 19, 2026, https://workforce.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/5dfb83d5-d3ac-4c73-a522-c01de7d16927/Program+Guidelines.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-5dfb83d5-d3ac-4c73-a522-c01de7d16927-m.f47YX.

46 David N. Bass, “Advocates: ‘One Door’ Policy Would Get Welfare Recipients Back to Work,” *The Carolina Journal*, March 29, 2024, https://www.carolinajournal.com/advocates-one-door-policy-would-get-welfare-recipients-back-to-work/.

47 Bass, “Advocates,” https://www.carolinajournal.com/advocates-one-door-policy-would-get-welfare-recipients-back-to-work/.

48 Public Spending on Labour Markets,” OECD.org, accessed May 25, 2026, https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/public-spending-on-labour-markets.html.

49 “Labour Markets,” https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/public-spending-on-labour-markets.html.

50 David Deming, “Four Facts about Human Capital.” Journal of Economic Perspectives 36, no. 3 (Summer 2022): 75–102, https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.36.3.75.

51 “Introduction to Benefits Cliffs and Public Assistance Programs,” National Conference of State Legislatures, updated December 27, 2024, https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/introduction-to-benefits-cliffs-and-public-assistance-programs.

52 “Unemployment Insurance,” United States Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, accessed June 14, 2026, https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/.

JFF

Building a Future
That Works
For Everyone