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FUNDING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STATES

CSG East Webinar
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Partnership Opportunities to Support Workforce Development for Infrastructure Law-Funded Projects

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What is the Good Jobs Initiative?

Announced in January 2022, GJI provides critical information to workers, employers, and governments as they work to improve job quality and create access to good union jobs free from discrimination and harassment for **all** working people (with emphasis on Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; immigrants; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals in rural communities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with or recovering from substance use disorder; and justice-involved individuals).

GJI Focuses on:

- 1) **Worker Empowerment**—providing easily accessible information to workers about their rights and lifting-up union organizing and collective bargaining;
- 2) **Employer Engagement**—engaging employer stakeholders as partners in improving job quality and workforce pathways to good jobs; and
- 3) **Agency Support**—supporting federal agencies by coordinating labor advisors and providing technical assistance on grants, contracts, and other investments designed to improve job quality.



What has the Good Jobs Initiative done so far?

To date, the Good Jobs Initiative has:

- Worked in collaboration with federal agency partners to incentivize equity and good jobs in over ***\$97.4 billion dollars*** of competitive grant funding;
- Entered into three Memorandums of Understanding with the Departments of **Transportation**, **Commerce**, and **Energy** where each agency details its commitment to using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds to support equitable workforce development pathways into good jobs;
- Established shared **Good Jobs Principles** with the Department of Commerce identifying essential elements of a quality job;
- Engaged both small and large employers across the country to **showcase** how they are recruiting and retaining diverse workers by investing in training, higher wages, benefits, and respecting workers' right to organize and collectively bargain.
- Created a one-stop-job quality resource center for federal investments at **GoodJobs.gov**.



Competitive Grants

- About \$124.4B available in competitive funding
- Asking transportation applicants—states, cities, transit agencies, ports, etc—to prioritize workforce development
- For most grants, project funding can be spent on workforce development if needed to support jobs on the project
- Biggest competitive grants
 - RAISE--\$7.5B (awards just released; next NOFO expected in January)
 - Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA)-\$7.25B
 - Mega projects-\$5B
 - Port Infrastructure Development Program-\$2.25B

We have developed [examples of how all of these grants are being used for workforce.](#)



Selection Criteria

Most DOT competitive grant programs have a selection criteria or priority consideration for job quality and workforce development. Specifically, applicants are asked to address:

1. Creating good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union.
2. Expanding high-quality training and education programs to help train and place people in good-paying jobs, with a focus on women, people of color, and other populations facing systemic barriers to employment.
3. Implementing policies both during procurement and during project implementation that will promote the hiring and retention of underrepresented workers.

Look at our [Checklist for a Strong Workforce and Labor Plan](#)

Use of grants for workforce

- Most competitive DOT grants can be used on workforce development if related to jobs on the project.



Formula Funding

Most BIL funding can be spent on workforce development and education but is formula (\$466B). Accessing the funding depends on intentional action on the part of state and local transportation entities.

Two of the biggest programs are:

1. States can use all of their major highway funding on workforce development (~\$50B per year). BIL specifically added eligibility for support to community colleges and vocational schools in addition to 4-year universities as well as apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. [See the official guidance.](#)
2. Up to 0.5% of FTA Urban Area Formula Program (Section 5307) (~\$6B per year)



Opportunities for Direct funding for Workforce Development

1. Low or No Emission Vehicle Program

- \$7.2 Billion dedicated over five years for transit agencies to purchase zero-emission fleets. 5% of grant awards dedicated to workforce training to retrain existing workers and bring in new workers.
- Awarded \$43M in workforce funds to 75 transit agencies in first round.
- [Most recent notice of funding opportunity](#) just came out.

2. Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements [\(CRISI\) Grants](#)

- \$5B over five years
- Workforce only projects are eligible.
- Two workforce awards (\$6 to \$8M) [made](#): \$4.5M to University of Delaware for scaling Rail Engineering Program to HBCUs and \$8M to Amtrak for mechanic apprenticeship program.
- Next NOFO coming out end of August.



What Should Local Elected Officials Do?

- Convene workforce agencies and transportation agencies together and encourage them to:
 - **Develop an understanding** of the gaps in your regional training system.
 - **Identify specific programs** that could meet workforce needs for project owners and that they could help scale with limited funding.
 - **Share information** with one another—transportation agencies should let workforce partners know about their upcoming projects that will require workforce training.
- Develop ways for transportation and workforce agencies to leverage each other's funding—
 - Formula funds and competitive funds
 - Low/No grants
 - DOL formula funding and funding opportunities



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Final Thoughts and Questions

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