

SKILLSforCA



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Skills for CA 2022 Policy Priorities

[Skills for California](#) is a statewide network of organizations advancing workforce development policies that remove systemic barriers and promote an inclusive economy for all Californians. The Network's guiding principles are equity, pathways to good jobs, and systems innovation. As we continue to experience economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are calling on our state leaders to use every policy lever possible to protect and support our most underserved workers, communities, and small businesses now and into the future. As a network, we believe that the path forward is to rebuild equitably and build on the recent wins that promote worker rights and quality jobs.

Skills for CA focuses on workforce development, which includes, but is not limited to, education and skills training. We know that California cannot train its way out of an economic crisis or build an inclusive economy based solely on increasing skills and access. Indeed, workforce development policy must include policies that expand access to affordable child care, housing, transportation, food, and health care; make sure the workplace is fair and free from discrimination; and create more quality jobs while also raising standards in low wage sectors and industries.

As we continue to chart a path towards economic equity, our 2022 policy priorities are centered around inclusive workforce development policies that uplift workers, including workers with disabilities, opportunity youth, adult learners, and communities of color - as well as support the workforce needs of high-road employers. Transforming the future of work will require elevating critical issues impacting workers and small businesses as the state endeavors to create a more inclusive, equitable, and racially just economy where everyone has what they need to thrive. We look forward to working alongside the administration, legislature, and stakeholder partners to build and secure an inclusive economic recovery for all. Below are the Skills for CA network's 2022 policy priorities:

- ❖ **Advance job quality** especially in low-wage and front-line industries by identifying strategies to encourage and increase jobs that offer family-supporting wages, comprehensive benefits, health and safety, scheduling, opportunities for career advancement and employer education, and other indicators prioritized by workers. Workforce development should include not only policies and investments that support workers moving from low-wage to higher-wage jobs but also policies that improve the conditions of workers' current jobs, inclusive of union and non-union represented workers and those working in the gig economy. All workers, especially those in low-wage and front-line industries, deserve to have their economic needs and career aspirations fulfilled through dignified employment. Further, high-quality jobs attract job seekers and can be a tool to address industry workforce recruitment and retention needs.

- ❖ **Strengthen and secure a social safety net that supports pathways to good jobs and training** by increasing access and resources for basic needs such as food, healthcare, housing, childcare, affordable broadband connectivity, and access to digital skill-building and digital literacy opportunities, as underserved Californians study and work to achieve their career goals. Increased funding for social safety net services should prioritize accessibility for communities of color, opportunity youth, workers with disabilities, undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families who do not qualify for federal relief and formerly incarcerated individuals.

- ❖ **Support and expand industry-specific training that leads to good jobs** by expanding Integrated Education and Training programs and high-road industry partnerships that develop and/or strengthen regional strategies through partnerships with business, education, workforce, labor, and community organizations to meet the socio-economic needs of workers, businesses, and communities alike.

- ❖ **Support and strengthen career technical education programs at community colleges** by providing sustainable funding and programming at community colleges for adult learners, opportunity youth, and workers to increase short- and long-term training opportunities that lead to quality, industry-recognized credentials and certificates, while ensuring that financial aid is accessible for students, regardless of immigration status, to cover tuition, materials, digital devices, and other supply costs.

- ❖ **Expand earn and learn training opportunities** for workers in low-wage industries by funding pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, in addition to investing in the accessibility and acquisition of industry-recognized credentials and certifications that are outcome-driven. Increase incentives for employers, workforce organizations, community college registered apprenticeship and cooperative education programs, and industry leaders to develop and strengthen paid training that prioritizes communities experiencing occupational segregation and earning low wages.
- ❖ **Build worker power** by supporting the worker voice and organizing in low-wage industries; integrating worker rights education into publicly funded workforce programs; ensuring recovery investments are tied to the creation of quality jobs; and prioritizing worker representation and decision-making power on key policy bodies to provide accountability for equity and job quality.
- ❖ **Strengthen the state's efforts to use data** to guide decision-making around workforce development investments and policies that provide students and workers with training, support services to access family-sustaining jobs, and careers. This includes continuing the state's efforts to develop and implement the Cradle-to-Career Data System, share transparently so that California can assess whether its education and workforce development efforts and broader economic mobility strategies are succeeding - all while maintaining data security.
- ❖ **Develop and expand policies and investments that prepare and support opportunity youth (OY)** to enter into the workforce. OY face unique employment barriers that often do not align with workforce development efforts that center adults. Prioritizing this community will expand the pool of talent that employers can access to meet their workforce needs.