

AFA E-Digest

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In this edition: State leaders drive apprenticeship growth, federal updates shape workforce policy, and industries innovate to meet future demands.

AFA Apprenticeship Summit Program Announced

AFA has released the [session schedule and other program details](#) for its **annual apprenticeship summit**, to be held February 5-6 in Washington, DC. The program draws on over 60 session proposals from AFA members and partners and features such topics as sustainability, funding, equity, as well as deep dives on apprenticeships in a range of occupations. Pre-conference sessions on community colleges, degree apprenticeship, and a bootcamp for those interested in growing their understanding of apprenticeship will also be offered. [Register for the summit today.](#)

AFA Webinar on the English Apprenticeship System

AFA will offer a **webinar** entitled [Apprenticeship in England: Policy and Practice Insights from Across the Pond](#) on December 11 at 12:00 pm ET. Presenting will be Ben Rowland, Chief Executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). AELP is a version of AFA's counterpart organization in England. Register for the webinar [at this link.](#)



Spotlight: Governors Lead the Way in Expanding Apprenticeships

Across the country, governors are using apprenticeships to build stronger workforces and create pathways to economic opportunity. Recent The National Governors Association highlights recent initiatives highlight that show the diverse ways states are addressing workforce needs while preparing students for future careers.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis is expanding high school apprenticeships, allowing students to earn real-world experience and college credits simultaneously. Universal preschool and free school meals are also part of his strategy to address learning gaps and support student success.

New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham implemented cradle-to-career policies, including free childcare, tutoring, and universal free college, including covering apprenticeship costs. These initiatives have improved literacy outcomes and supported students in high-poverty areas.

Maryland Governor Wes Moore launched the Apprenticeship Pledge, aiming to recruit 500 new employers and 5,000 apprentices within a year. Efforts include expanding community college partnerships and celebrating apprenticeship leaders through the Maryland Apprenticeship Awards.

[California Governor Gavin Newsom](#) invested \$24.7 million in apprenticeship programs across sectors like healthcare and IT. These efforts aim to serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029 while promoting equity and addressing labor shortages.

These initiatives showcase how governors are leveraging apprenticeships to meet workforce demands, support equitable access to opportunities, and prepare communities for long-term economic success. As these programs expand, they highlight the critical role of collaboration between public and private sectors in shaping a skilled and resilient workforce.



State Strategies for Advancing Apprenticeships

[An op-ed penned by Alabama Apprenticeship Director Josh Laney and Director of Apprenticeship Colorado Denise Miller](#) describes how states are driving apprenticeship growth. Legislation referencing apprenticeships more than doubling. Governors in 16 states have highlighted apprenticeship initiatives, and policies like Alabama's Success Plus plan and Colorado's recognition of apprenticeship intermediaries showcase innovative approaches. From setting measurable goals to leveraging public-private partnerships and sustainable funding models, states are leading efforts to expand access to high-quality, work-based learning opportunities. AFA's [new state policy report](#) provides a comprehensive look at these strategies and their impact on expanding apprenticeships nationwide.



Partnering for Progress: Community Colleges and Apprenticeships

[A commentary in Community College daily notes that community colleges are increasingly vital to scaling apprenticeships](#), offering affordable education paired with hands-on training that aligns with industry needs. Partnerships between colleges and employers are expanding, with programs like those at Ivy Tech in Indiana and Dallas College in Texas demonstrating the potential for growth across industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. Learn more about how these collaborations are reshaping workforce development in [AFA's recent report on community colleges and apprenticeships](#).



Federal Leadership and Workforce Policy

[President-elect Trump's nomination of Linda McMahon as Secretary of](#)



Apprenticeship In the States

[California's Department of Industrial Relations awarded \\$24.7 million to 65](#)

[Education](#) has sparked significant discussion about the future of workforce education. McMahon has emphasized the importance of aligning education with workforce needs, advocating for expanding career and technical education and short-term workforce training programs through measures like Pell Grant reform. Her [recent public statements](#) emphasize the transformative power of apprenticeships and alternative pathways to successful careers, drawing inspiration from global models like Switzerland. [American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten also noted McMahon's focus on vocational education and expressed cautious optimism](#) about the potential for bipartisan progress in this area.

[Donald Trump has nominated Congresswoman Lori Chavez-DeRemer for U.S. Secretary of Labor](#), a move that could influence national labor policies. Chavez-DeRemer, the first Latina and Republican woman elected to Congress from Oregon, has a background in small business and local governance. Known for her support of economic growth and workforce training, she is expected to prioritize expanding apprenticeship programs if confirmed. Her nomination has sparked mixed reactions, highlighting debates over her ability to balance labor rights with business interests.



Industry-Specific Developments

[Maryland has introduced the Future of Procurement Apprenticeship](#), the first U.S. program focused on public procurement careers. Led by the Maryland Department of General Services, the program combines classroom learning, on-the-job training, and certifications to prepare participants for procurement roles within state government. Participants will earn an associate degree, state procurement

apprenticeship programs across sectors like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing during National Apprenticeship Week. This second round of Apprenticeship Innovation Funding (AIF) will support 8,270 apprentices earning nearly \$32 per hour, with a focus on expanding opportunities in non-traditional industries and removing barriers for underrepresented groups. Governor Newsom aims to serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029, reinforcing California's leadership in creating diverse, skilled talent pipelines.

[New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced that the city has created over 15,000 apprenticeship opportunities in less than three years](#), surpassing the halfway mark toward its goal of 30,000 apprenticeships by 2030. This initiative has expanded beyond construction to include industries like health care, technology, and public service, supported by over \$15 million in public and private investment. The effort focuses on fostering diversity, with 83% of health care apprentices and 92% of youth apprentices identifying as people of color, while also strengthening connections between education and on-the-job training to build an inclusive, skilled workforce.



Legislative Developments

[Virginia Rep. Bob Good introduced the Developing America's Workforce Act](#), aiming to expand industry-led apprenticeship programs as an alternative to traditional college education. The bill proposes authorizing third-party organizations as "standards recognition entities" under the Department of Labor to review and approve apprenticeship programs. These programs would require core components like paid work, mentorship,

certifications, and practical experience, addressing workforce needs while fostering economic development and public service expertise.

and classroom instruction. The legislation seeks to fill workforce gaps, reduce student debt burdens, and boost economic opportunities by making industry-recognized credentials more accessible.

Other Stories

[Checkr has announced the expansion of its apprenticeship program, Catalyst](#), which provides 12 months of paid on-the-job training and mentorship for workers with criminal records. Following a successful pilot, the program will include two funded cohorts over the next two years, inviting employers to join a 2025 cohort aimed at supporting fair chance hiring and building diverse talent pipelines. Checkr is partnering with organizations like TechSF and The Last Mile to enhance workforce readiness and facilitate incarceration-to-employment pathways.

[A recent update from the official White House website](#) highlights the significant growth of Registered Apprenticeships in the U.S., with active apprenticeships increasing from 360,000 in 2015 to over 667,000 in 2024. This expansion spans diverse industries like education and healthcare and includes greater participation by women and racial minorities. Research underscores the substantial wage premiums apprenticeships offer, and federal initiatives, such as recent executive orders, aim to further expand and modernize these programs to meet workforce needs and provide reliable career pathways.

[U.S. Representative Val Hoyle \(D-OR\) marked National Apprenticeship Week by highlighting the critical role of Registered Apprenticeships](#) in meeting workforce needs and providing debt-free pathways to middle-class jobs. Hoyle has supported key legislative efforts, including the LEAP Act, which offers tax credits for hiring apprentices, and the National Apprenticeship Act, allocating \$3.85 billion to expand apprenticeship access. Her advocacy also includes pushing for apprenticeship integration in federal projects and robust funding for workforce programs. National Apprenticeship Week, now in its 10th year, celebrates the value of apprenticeships nationwide.

Members and AFA in the News

The [AICPA & CIMA](#), representing the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants, has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as an [Apprenticeship Ambassador](#). This designation highlights their commitment to expanding and diversifying Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, particularly in the accounting profession. Through this role, AICPA & CIMA will champion innovative practices, enhance apprenticeship models, and promote accessible pathways into accounting careers, with a focus on addressing workforce shortages and increasing opportunities for underrepresented groups.

The [Maddison Spaulding Memorial Scholarship](#), launched during National Apprenticeship Week's Women in Manufacturing Day, honors Maddison Spaulding, a trailblazing **National Institute for Industry and Career Advancement** apprentice and an advocate for Registered Apprenticeships (RAs). This scholarship supports women in RAs within semiconductor and advanced manufacturing by awarding \$1,000 annually to up to five recipients to address barriers like transportation and childcare. Through this initiative, Maddison's legacy continues, inspiring the next generation of women apprentices to thrive in manufacturing careers.

And Finally... Booper the Dog Brings Apprenticeships to Life for Idaho Students

[The Idaho Department of Labor and Apprenticeship Idaho are using an innovative approach to promote apprenticeships with Booper Dreams Big: An Almost True Story of Apprenticeship](#), a children's book distributed to over 3,000 elementary school classrooms statewide. Written by Elaine Zabriskie, the story introduces students to the value of apprenticeships through the journey of Booper the dog, who becomes an apprentice satellite technician. The initiative highlights growing apprenticeship opportunities in diverse fields, with Idaho seeing a 340% increase in apprenticeship participation since 2014.



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