

# INVEST IN WORKFORCE EDUCATION

## Reverse the Higher Education Bias and Invest in Construction Workforce

### Action Needed:

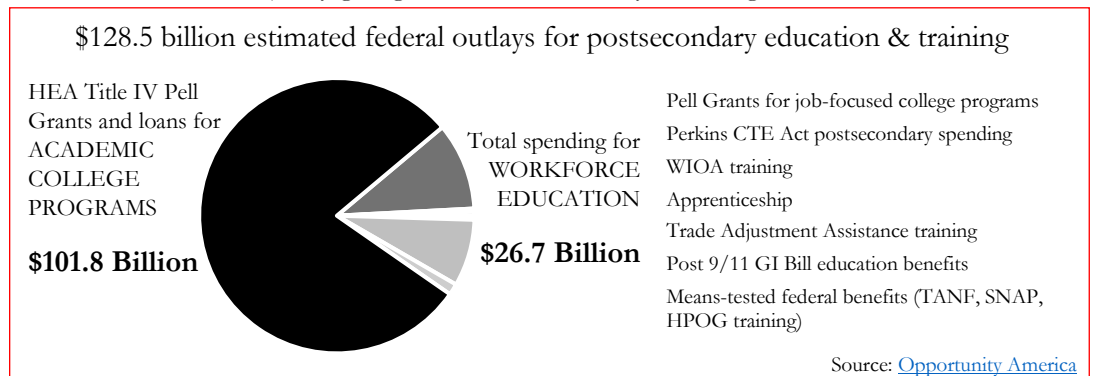
Support increased funding for CTE in the FY 2024 appropriations bill and co-sponsor the JOBS Act. [S.161](#) and [H.R.793](#) would provide expanded access to training programs in the construction industry that would immediately take a significant step towards bridging the skills gap and helping individuals receive necessary training for job development.

### Background:

- The construction industry's labor shortages remain severe with most construction firms expecting labor conditions to remain tight. Despite firms increasing pay and benefits, the workforce shortage continues. According to an [AGC survey](#) that looks at workforce issues in construction, 91 percent of firms report they are having trouble filling positions. The industry is facing the effects of decades of education policies directing students to attend four-year institutions as the only career option.

### AGC Message:

- Reverse the Higher Education Bias Against Non-Four-Year Degree Programs.** Currently only 21 percent of all total federal education funding goes to career or workforce education with the majority going to traditional four-year colleges.



- **Increase Career and Technical Education Funding (Perkins Act.)** Perkins is the primary federal program for developing and supporting career and technical education programs for secondary and post-secondary students. Exposing younger individuals to construction skills and careers is critical. However, these programs, especially construction focused ones, are expensive to operate and administer for local schools. And these programs face rising inflationary pressure and lingering pandemic impacts.
  - **Support JOBS Act to Expand Pell Grants to All Individuals Seeking a Career.** Pell grants provide billions of dollars in federal aid to over seven million students in post-secondary programs of at least a semester in length. Currently, Pell grant eligible programs must be a full-time semester in length, which has largely limited student's ability to use them to pursue short-term career education programs. Emphasizing competency and value of a program over instruction time metrics would allow for a host of craft worker industry-recognized certificate programs to become eligible for federal needs-based aid.