



July 30, 2020

The Honorable Jared Huffman
1527 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Huffman:

The Workforce Alliance of the North Bay applauds Congress' ongoing and bipartisan efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including legislation that has shored up our unemployment insurance system, expanded access to food and other needed assistance programs, and otherwise helped to blunt the immediate impact of the crisis on America's families, workers, businesses, and economy.

Over the past six weeks, more than 33 million workers newly filed for unemployment benefits, and unemployment could easily reach [20 percent; cresting above even Great Depression era numbers](#). As we look to future packages that respond to our current crisis and its recovery, workers and businesses desperately need Congress to include vital investments in skills workers need to fill in-demand jobs today and to return to the workforce once our economy reopens.

Specifically, I write you to urge Congress to immediately invest at least \$15 billion in our nation's workforce development system, consistent with investments proposed in the Relaunching America's Workforce Act, to ensure that we can respond quickly to current and projected demands for new workers in key industries, while helping those who have lost their jobs as a result of this crisis to transition to new family-supporting jobs.

Funding of this magnitude will be necessary to allow for services aimed at assisting the millions of Americans who will need help navigating the new unemployment and reemployment process in this time of crisis and businesses working to reskill and upskill workers. It will help workers identify careers in in-demand industries and occupations, seek the education and training needed for these careers, and access supports like childcare and transportation that can help them succeed in training and in new jobs. It will ensure businesses are able to inform training provided in in-demand occupations and empower states and local areas to support access and analysis of labor market information necessary for rapid response to regional needs.

Our nation's workforce system – including workforce boards, labor unions, community and technical colleges, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders – stands ready to assist in getting U.S. workers and businesses the skills they need for today's challenges and tomorrow's economic resurgence. Unfortunately, current investments in the U.S. workforce system fall far short of the needs of workers, businesses, and communities. The U.S. invests 25 percent less in workforce programming today than we did before the great recession. During that downturn, the workforce system experienced

