



2019 POLICY ACTION AGENDA

California's economy is at a crossroads. The state's GDP is now the fifth largest in the world, but with one in four Californians living in or near poverty, the state's prosperity stands on shaky ground. California's policy leaders can secure an economic future that works for all of California by investing in the state's greatest asset: its people. A stable, well-paying job is a top priority for Californians who struggle to make ends meet. Meanwhile, a skilled and diverse workforce is a key asset to California companies competing in a global marketplace.

Governor Newsom and the Legislature must work together in 2019 to develop and implement solutions to strengthen our economy and support broadly shared prosperity. This 2019 Policy Action Agenda for California identifies three immediate, actionable strategies for achieving this goal. These strategies are aligned with our state workforce development policy agenda: Securing a Strong Economic Future for all Californians, which has been endorsed by a network of over 40 business, labor, community-based, educational, and workforce organizations.

Create more training opportunities for low-wage workers and other low-income Californians. Almost 5 million working Californians earn less than \$14/hour. Many of these Californians want to increase their skills to move into higher-paying jobs with better opportunities for career advancement. And many more low-income Californians face challenges — such as financial constraints, limited literacy, numeracy, digital, and English language skills, criminal records, and limited work experience — that must be addressed so they can participate in job training and the workforce.

ACTION: Leverage existing public funding streams — such as the Employment Training Panel, Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, and infrastructure investments — to provide training and upskilling in high-demand industries that offer economic mobility for low-wage workers and other workers with barriers to employment.

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ACTION: Invest in high quality pre-apprenticeship programs tightly linked to apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand fields in order to expand and diversify the apprenticeship pipeline.

ACTION: Support community-based organizations that can remove barriers to work and expand industry-based training and support services.

Transform financial aid so that more low-income Californians can afford to build in-demand skills. While California waives community college tuition and fees for low-income students, additional costs — from books and supplies to housing, transportation, and childcare — make post-secondary career education and training unaffordable, particularly for working adults who need to balance the costs of training with work and family needs. The net cost of attending California community colleges can be higher than UC or CSU because non-tuition costs are less likely to be covered.

ACTION: Increase state investments in financial aid provided through the Cal Grant program to better reflect students' financial needs beyond tuition and expand access to financial aid to more people, including working adults.

Create data systems that work across California's workforce, education, human services, and corrections systems while protecting individuals' privacy. High-quality, cross-sector data systems can help practitioners, policymakers, and the public make informed decisions about education, training, and economic mobility strategies. They can be used to understand educational progress and outcomes, close equity gaps, and improve workforce outcomes. Statewide data systems should provide up-to-date information and produce tools that people, decisionmakers, and providers can use. These data systems and tools should not report personally identifiable information, should protect the privacy of individuals, and should maintain data security.

ACTION: Create state longitudinal data systems (SDLS) to inform policymaking, close equity gaps, and improve educational, workforce, and other outcomes. Data systems for education and workforce programs should “talk” with one another and with data from social services, corrections, and other programs that impact Californians.

Finally, as California's leaders build on the strengths of the existing system to take workforce development to a new level, they should do so in full conversation and partnership with workers and students, industry, labor, community leaders, and education and training providers who are committed to ensuring that workforce development is one of key levers for equity, economic opportunity and growth.