GIIA Global Infrastructure Investor Association

GIIA Policy Paper

Developing America's Infrastructure Workforce:

A Federal Skills Strategy for Long Term Success

Executive summary

The Global Infrastructure Investor Association (GIIA) calls on Congress and the Administration to strengthen and modernize federal workforce development programs to ensure the U.S. infrastructure sector can meet current and future demand. With significant federal investment flowing into energy, transportation, broadband, and water infrastructure, the country now faces a mounting workforce challenge: there are simply not enough skilled workers to build and operate the infrastructure America needs.

The United States faces an infrastructure investment shortfall of over **US$15.2 trillion between 2024 and 2043**.[1] While federal initiatives have unlocked significant capital for transformative infrastructure projects, the ability to fully execute this vision depends not only on dollars, but on people.

Outdated and underfunded federal programs fail to keep pace with the labor demands created by today's infrastructure ambitions. These gaps risk delaying project delivery, raising costs, and limiting the full economic potential of infrastructure investment.

A skilled and future-ready infrastructure workforce is a national imperative. By investing in human capital alongside physical capital, the federal government can ensure the success of its infrastructure agenda—and secure long-term economic growth, competitiveness, and resilience.

1. Strengthen and expand federal programs for infrastructure workforce development

Problem:

Federal programs aimed at incentivizing infrastructure initiatives and supporting innovation in the infrastructure market through workforce availability and development are often underfunded or have a limited reach.

As a result, public and private project sponsors face increasing difficulty in sourcing the talent required to deliver critical infrastructure efficiently and at scale.

Solution:

Federal agencies should increase:

- Funding for Section 5314(b) of the FAST Act, which authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to undertake, or make grants and contracts for, human resource needs related to public transportation activities. These activities could include:
    - Employment training programs
    - Outreach programs to increase employment in key infrastructure sectors
    - Research on sector specific personnel and training needs
    - Training assistance for business opportunities.

Recommended actions:

[1] 2024-Bridging-the-Gap-Economic-Study.pdf

- Enact new legislation providing funding and competitive grant programs for technical assistance and workforce development in key infrastructure sectors including energy, broadband, water, and social infrastructure.

- Adapt provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and accompanying regulations to encourage infrastructure workforce development by:
    - creating a framework for efficient identification of labor needs in the infrastructure sector,
    - implementing training programs for the development of skilled labor addressing the needs of the infrastructure sector,
    - identifying sectors where current workforce demands exceed supply of skilled labor and creating specific financial incentives to attract potential workers,
    - connecting potential employers with skilled labor efficiently, and
    - creating specialized training programs and job placement resources aimed at facilitating the deployment of new technologies and AI tools in the infrastructure sector.

Benefits to the U.S. economy

Expands delivery capacity

A skilled infrastructure workforce ensures that projects funded by federal programs can be executed efficiently and at scale—closing the gap between capital deployment and on-the-ground results.

Supports job creation and upward mobility

Investments in infrastructure workforce training will create high-quality, long-term jobs across a wide range of skill levels, particularly in communities disproportionately affected by past disinvestment.

Increases project efficiency and cost-effectiveness

A prepared workforce reduces delays, change orders, and project overruns—delivering more value for taxpayers and investors alike.

Accelerates adoption of new technology

Targeted workforce programs can help train and deploy workers in emerging fields such as AI-enabled infrastructure operations, climate-resilient construction, and automated asset management.

About GIIA

GIIA represents over 100 of the world's leading private investors in infrastructure, responsible for over US$2.04 trillion of infrastructure assets under management globally, including in the United States. We advocate for public policies that unlock private capital to help meet America's urgent infrastructure needs, from transportation and water systems to broadband and clean energy.

Without targeted federal action to address workforce constraints, infrastructure projects will face rising costs, delays, and missed opportunities for economic inclusion. GIIA and its members urge federal policymakers to prioritize a national workforce strategy that is ambitious and complements America's infrastructure goals.