



May 3, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress begins the fiscal year 2025 (FY25) appropriations process, the America Forward Coalition urges you to continue efforts to fund programs that advance equity, spur innovation, reward results, and foster cross-sector partnerships.

[America Forward](#) is the nonpartisan policy initiative of New Profit, a pioneering national venture philanthropy organization that invests in breakthrough social entrepreneurs and systems-change initiatives, catalyzes and builds their impact, and transforms how government and philanthropy pursue social change to ensure that all people can thrive. The America Forward Coalition is made up of more than 100 innovative, high-impact [organizations](#) that lead creative solutions to our country’s most pressing social problems.

This upcoming fiscal year, we strongly urge Congress to address societal disparities; prepare youth to thrive in school, the workforce, and their communities; and lay the foundation for a brighter future by prioritizing investments in the following four areas: (1) whole learner programs; (2) core educational programs; (3) economic mobility; and (4) national service and civic engagement.

Whole Learner Programs

Across the country, students are still facing impacts from the pandemic and contending with concerning levels of academic and mental health challenges. Based on brain science showing that academic and emotional development are inextricably linked,¹ we believe that it is vital that schools implement evidence-based, holistic learning models that seamlessly integrate academic content with developing a broad range of skills. Such an approach meets students where they are, as individual “whole learners,” and fosters them into well-rounded individuals who have the tools to navigate all aspects of life, including

¹ https://cms.learningthroughplay.com/media/wmtlmbe0/learning-through-play_web.pdf

an increasingly dynamic and technologically driven future workplace. We urge Congress to include a pilot program that would establish grants to help high-need schools transition to schoolwide programs with robust evidence-based whole-learner approaches that reflect the dynamic, interconnected nature of how youth learn. The pilot program is based on the America Forward Coalition's [Whole Learner Act](#) proposal.

We also call on Congress to increase investments in programs that support the whole-learner model by providing comprehensive social, health, and academic services for students, such as Full-Service Community Schools, School-Based Mental Health Services, Mental Health Service Professional Development Grants, and Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. We also call for greater investments in Education, Innovation, and Research (EIR) to encourage research on the holistic needs of students and investments in teacher supports (such as Title II funding, Hawkins, and the Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant Program) to ensure the adoption of evidence-based, whole-learner approaches in professional development opportunities.

Core Educational Programs

Our core educational programs that span Pre-K through higher education are essential to reducing barriers to access and gaps in opportunity, creating safe and healthy learning environments, and guiding students to thrive in their communities and the future workforce. We call on Congress to continue to invest in the earliest years of a child's life to help set the groundwork for future learning and development, by building on the FY24 increases in funding for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. To support our most vulnerable students at the K-12 level, we also encourage Congress to invest more in Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These programs play a vital role in addressing the diverse needs of students, fostering inclusive learning environments, and empowering marginalized communities to thrive academically. Finally, to support students at the higher education level, we urge Congress to increase the Pell Grant maximum award and boost the full range of financial aid and student support programs, such as Postsecondary Student Success Grants and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants. It is essential to make higher education more affordable, as data shows that college education is linked to higher pay, job security, healthier behaviors, and more civic involvement.²

Economic Mobility

Enhancing economic mobility helps bolster families, communities, and the nation as a whole. Yet, despite the growing demand for workers, many individuals, especially those in historically underserved areas, encounter systemic barriers to employment and economic opportunities. To promote economic mobility for all, empower individuals to thrive, and foster a stronger, more equitable economy, we call on Congress to invest in a new Workforce Development Innovation Fund; the President's proposed Career Training Fund; YouthBuild; and other programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The United States has long underinvested in workforce development relative to the size of the American economy and our nation's needs; and we encourage Congress to target new investments in effective, inclusive approaches.

Furthermore, we also call on Congress to increase funding for the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program, including data and implementation infrastructure necessary to realize the full potential of this invaluable funding stream. Successfully implementing and expanding SNAP E&T is critical to hundreds of thousands of Americans working to achieve economic stability and break cycles of generational poverty.

² [College Education Linked to Higher Pay, Job Security, Healthier Behaviors and More Civic Involvement: New College Board Report – Newsroom](#)

Civics Education/National Service

As a nation, we are experiencing unprecedented public distrust in our institutions and government. Young people and the next generation of leaders have been handed the daunting task of restoring American democracy. As a country, we must ensure these growing leaders are civically prepared, informed, and engaged. We call on Congress to increase funding for the American History and Civics-National Activities Grant Program to promote innovation in instruction, learning, strategies, and professional development in American history, civics, and government.

National service – primarily funded through AmeriCorps – not only prepares young leaders for diverse career paths but also fosters unity among people from various backgrounds by engaging them in common purpose. By leveraging national service, policymakers can bolster civic engagement, nurture future leaders, and address critical challenges — including support for under-resourced schools, mental health supports for students, and filling hard-to-fill positions in the social sector — while strengthening our democracy and social fabric. We urge Congress to increase funding for AmeriCorps to increase participation and raise corps member benefits to reach livable allowance levels.

In addition to the aforementioned programs, we urge you to consider our full list of appropriations requests found here:

We thank you for your consideration of these requests. We recognize the many important choices your Committees face and thank you for your ongoing support for policies that help communities find and test new ways of tackling seemingly intractable problems. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if we can be of any further assistance, and we look forward to working with you to advance funding for these important priorities in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Members of the America Forward Coalition

Program	America Forward Request
Department of Education: Elementary and Secondary	
Proposed Whole Learner Pilot Program	\$100 Million
Title I-A Formula Funds	\$19.4 Billion
IDEA	Part B: \$14.394 Billion Part C: \$974.800 Million Part D: \$273.560 Million Section 619: \$683.500 Million
Title II-A Formula Grants to States	\$3 Billion
Title III	\$2 Billion
School Based Mental Health Services Grants	\$194.519 Million
Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grants	\$182.99 Million
Full-Service Community Schools	\$443 Million
Fostering Diverse Schools Program	\$10 Million
Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants	\$194 Million
21st Century Community Learning Centers	\$2 Billion
Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Total Funding	\$900 Million
IES Accelerate, Transform, and Scale (ATS) Initiative	\$52.7 Million
Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Program	\$100 Million
Education, Innovation, and Research (EIR)	\$514 Million
School Leader Recruitment and Support Program	\$40 Million
Charter Schools Program	\$500 Million
Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Grant Program	\$94 Million

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth	\$800 Million
Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants	\$1.6 Billion
School Safety and National Activities Program	\$601 Million, including the School Climate Transformation Grant Program to support the ongoing needs of students for trauma informed care, strengthening school climate and improving behavioral outcomes for all students.
American History and Civics-National Activities Grant Program	\$30 Million
Department of Education: Higher Education	
Pell Grant Maximum Award	\$13,000
Federal Work Study Program	\$1.603 Billion
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	\$1.150 Billion
Postsecondary Student Success Grants (PSSG)	\$165 Million
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)	\$262 Million, to create, develop, implement, replicate, or scale evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and field-initiated innovations to improve postsecondary access, matriculation, completion and career success using a tiered-evidence structure; along with \$25 Million for the President’s proposed Comprehensive Postsecondary Student Supports Program.
Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program	\$500 Million
Federal TRIO Program	\$1.298 Billion
GEAR UP	\$400 Million
Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence	\$45 Million
Teacher Quality Partnership Grants	\$300 Million
Aid for Institutional Development (HBCUs, TCCUs, ANNHs)	At least \$855.1 Million
Aid for HSIs	At least \$276 Million
Department of Health and Human Services	

Head Start and Early Head Start	\$16.480 Billion
Preschool Development Grants	\$500 Million
Child Care and Development Block Grants	\$12.400 Billion
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program	\$150 Million
Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant	\$12 Million
Project AWARE	\$244 Million, including programs for Resilience in Communities after Stress and Trauma; Cooperative Agreements for School-Based Trauma-Informed Support Services; and Mental Health Care for Children and Youth (Trauma-Informed Services in Schools)
Department of Labor	
State Grants for Dislocated Workers Assistance	\$1.096 Billion
Workforce Development Innovation Fund	\$200 Million
Workforce Data Quality Initiative	\$40 Million
Sectoral Employment through Career Training for Occupational Readiness (SECTOR)	\$50 Million
YouthBuild	\$196 Million, to support the full demonstrated need for the oversubscribed YouthBuild program
Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants	\$70 Million
Apprenticeship Grant	\$335 Million
State Grants for Youth Activities	\$948.13 Million
Career Training Fund	\$8 Billion
AmeriCorps	
Corporation for National and Community Service/AmeriCorps	\$1.5 Billion
Department of Agriculture	
Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Data and Technical Assistance (DATA) Grants	\$15 Million

SNAP E&T National Partnership Grants	\$15 Million
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