



American Workforce Policy Advisory Board

Working Group: Build the technological infrastructure necessary for the future of work

On May 19, 2020, the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board unanimously approved a Call-to-Action that includes the following recommendation:

- Initiate an unprecedented investment in digital infrastructure. The government and private sector must work collaboratively to deploy a once-in-a-generation infrastructure campaign to provide all Americans with affordable, high-speed access to online healthcare, education, and retail.

Since then, the Advisory Board's Data Transparency Working Group has deliberated further on the barriers and paths to greater access to affordable, high-speed internet access, expanded the working group's focus area, and updated its name to "Technological Infrastructure" working group. The pandemic has made it clear that the digital barriers to employment and education in the United States involve not just the access to and use of high-quality, transparent, and timely data, but also access to technology, broadband, and digital literacy.

The working group has expanded upon the May Call-to-Action by outlining more detailed principles that should guide government and private sector actions to expand our country's digital infrastructure. In the coming months, the working group will continue to explore the policies that government, education, and business must take to catalyze the creation and adoption of Interoperable Learning Records, as a technological foundation to increased skills-based hiring.

Digital Infrastructure Principles

Advance Access for All

This COVID-19 pandemic has vividly revealed the wide-ranging impact of existing disparities in access to the technology, broadband, and digital literacy required for full digital engagement. Resolving disparities in the availability and affordability of digital infrastructure will help increase access to educational opportunities for all Americans.

Coordinate and Empower Government Actors

The federal, state, local, and tribal governments all have a role to play to bridge the digital divide in America. We encourage federal, state, local and tribal governments to coordinate efforts and support the role of each level of government. The federal government can provide predevelopment funding and create a regulatory environment that supports private sector broadband investment and focuses federal support on broadband buildout in hard-to-serve areas. State and local governments can provide technical assistance and planning support to jumpstart a growing pipeline of innovative local broadband solutions.

Partner with the Private Sector

Private sector investment in the form of both ideas and capital is absolutely necessary to unleash the called for “unprecedented investment in digital infrastructure.” Government and industry partners—working together—can solve this problem in America.

Develop, Disseminate, and Use Accurate Data

Federal, state, local, tribal and private data sets should be leveraged to identify current gaps in broadband adoption, coverage, speed, quality and affordability. Only then can we measure progress toward equity in connectivity.

Build for Economic Competitiveness

As we seek to provide pathways to opportunity for all Americans, we must not inhibit the United States’ economic competitiveness with regard to next generation connectivity, devices, speed, quality, and adoption. This includes embracing the latest technology, both wired and wireless.