

The Agenda for America's Entrepreneurs: A skilled small business workforce

Small businesses face particular challenges in finding and retaining skilled workers. Not only do they lack the robust resources to create job-specific training programs, they also face barriers to offering benefits that are crucial to attracting top talent. This will continue to be an issue for small businesses struggling to keep their doors open as a result of the pandemic.

Additionally, our country's changing landscape provides an opportunity to enact meaningful policies that recognize the importance of immigrants to entrepreneurship and to address employers' need for a more robust workforce. This is why we must support policies that level the playing field and leverage education and training resources that support small employers.

Top priorities for Congress to support small business

- Support efforts to establish publicly-administered retirement savings programs at the state levels to help more small businesses, their employees and the self-employed access retirement plans.
- Pass comprehensive immigration reform guaranteeing eventual citizenship for those who contribute to our economic success, coupled with appropriate and reasonable employment verification provisions.

Prepare and develop employees with proper training

- Expand internship and mentoring programs to create career paths for youth and to ensure access to skilled, entry-level workers for small businesses.
- Reintroduce and pass legislation the Lifelong Learning and Training Account Act, which would make lifelong learning more accessible for low- and moderate-income workers by establishing a tax-preferred savings account with a federal match. It would also help solo entrepreneurs invest in their own development and acquire skills without the aid of an employer.
- Support regional economic clusters and partnerships that include educational institutions with the resources to provide industry-focused training and skills development.
- Implement studies that ensure Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs are meeting small business and worker needs.

Promote commonsense and comprehensive immigration policies

- Find a long-term solution for recipients of Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA), understanding that young immigrants are the lifeblood of entrepreneurship. We must similarly find a long-term solution for recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS).
- Reform the H-1B visa program to allow more applicants for both skilled and low-skilled workers and decrease the waiting period for rejected applicants from one year to three months.
- Create a "Startup Visa" for foreign-born entrepreneurs who wish to start a business in the U.S. There are currently no visa programs/products to support an immigrant that wants to start a new business.
- Enact the "[Heartland Visas](#)," a program that would provide a pathway for skilled immigrants to enter the United States to live in economically depressed areas to find a job on a voluntary basis.