

Ellevate LA 2021 Policy Statements

Higher Education & Louisiana's Workforce

Louisiana faces a "middle skills" workforce shortage in critical sectors such as healthcare, transportation, information technology, manufacturing and construction. "Middle skills" jobs are those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. This shortage is brought on by the fact that Louisiana's post-high-school educational attainment rate consistently ranks among the bottom states in the United States.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, the Louisiana Board of Regents cited a Georgetown University study that estimated that 53% of open jobs in Louisiana would require a career credential or college degree by the year 2020. In order to have a pool of ready-now workers and reach the average educational attainment rate for Southern states, Louisiana must increase the percentage of adults with some college from 30.7% to 42.0% by the year 2025, which equates to an increase of 182,495 credentials (NCHEMS/Board of Regents).

Now is the time to boldly reimagine an approach to providing Louisiana's un- and under-employed adult labor force with training that results in these much-needed credentials.

Ellevate Louisiana supports programs like Reboot Your Career and the MJ Foster Promise that fund affordable or free access for adults meeting economic requirements to programs leading to credentials in high-demand jobs in growing economic sectors such as healthcare, transportation, information technology, manufacturing, and construction. It is important that barriers to entry be kept low so that Louisiana can not only meet its workforce needs, but also help its people find meaningful employment and a better quality of life.

Ellevate Louisiana is also supportive of programs like Complete LA which was begun by the University of Louisiana System. By providing coaching, ease of entry, and inexpensive single course options for adults that attended but did not complete college, the UL System makes it easier for adults to increase their contribution to the workforce and to have higher earning potential.

Additionally, we must leverage the substantial federal resources that our state has and will receive through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan in any way possible to bolster these efforts.

We sit at the precipice of great possibility. Let's make changes to improve the future of our people, once and for all.