

Season 3 | Episode 57

# Google Initiative and Proposed Legislation Attempt to Address Skills Gap



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### Gene Marks:

Hey everyone, this is Gene Marks, and welcome to this week's episode of "On the Mark." Before we get started, please note that if you want to suggest any topics or give us advice or suggest any type of guests you'd like to have on our THRIVE podcast, please visit us at [payx.me/thrivetopics](https://payx.me/thrivetopics). That's P-A-Y-X dot M-E/thrivetopics.

OK, let's get to work. We've got some news this week and the news has to do with skills and training. A report was just released this week from Cornerstone OnDemand, which is an HR solutions service. They have findings from their 2022 global research study where they measured 1,800 employees and more than 800 business leaders across North America and Europe and the Asia-Pacific. Here is what this report found:

They found that nearly half of employers that were surveyed placed skills and talent shortages within their top 3 most-urgent concerns in the next three years. And it identified a strong correlation between overall business performance and the quality of new skilling support and development opportunities that are offered to employees.

A significant finding from the study uncovered more than a 30 percentage point skills confidence gap between employers who believe they were delivering skills to employees and the employees' confidence in their employers' ability to develop those kinds of skills — and that gap has done nothing but increase.

We have seen recently that the [U.S.] Labor Department released its Open Jobs Report — its JOLTS Reports — and there are about 11 and a half million open jobs in this country right now, many of them for skilled laborers, as well. There is really a significant skills shortage in this country.

But there is good news because there are two other items this week where people are doing something to address this issue. In Washington this past week, Congressman Scott Fitzgerald of Wisconsin, Congressman Jason Crow of Colorado, and Congressman Andrew Garbarino of New York, and Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania — all members of the House Small Business

Committee — joined together in introducing a bipartisan Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act to help more small businesses offer apprenticeships and on-the-job-learning opportunities to their workers.

By empowering these businesses to invest in their workforce, this act is designed to alleviate labor shortages, which have greatly impacted all of us running small businesses. Now, specifically, the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act is empowering the Small Business Development Centers to help our nation's small businesses establish and improve their apprenticeship and job-training programs.

Small Business Development Centers, which are part of the SBA — the Small Business Administration — they work to provide a suite of counseling and training services to small businesses, and this would be just another added support that they would be offering. So, there's legislation introduced to help the SBDCs do this.

Talk to your local Small Business Development Center — you can find them on the SBA website at [sba.gov](http://sba.gov) — and, by the way, search your state for any particular training resources, as well.

So, good bill that comes out of Washington this week. Hopefully, it will get passed soon.

There is another initiative to help skills, and this week that initiative comes from Google. Google is offering \$100,000 worth of tech training — free — to every U.S. business that applies. They will provide U.S. businesses, again, with \$100,000 worth of online courses and data analytics and design and other tech skills for their workers — your workers and mine — free of charge.

The offer marks a big expansion of their Google Career Certificates, which is a program the company launched in 2018 to help people globally boost their resumes by learning new tools at their own pace. Over 70,000 people in the United States and 205,000 globally have earned at least one of these certificates, and 75% have seen the benefits such as a new job or higher pay within six months, according to Google.

What I mean by free is this; The courses, which are designed by Google and sold to online education service Coursera, each typically cost about \$39 per month and they would take three to six months to finish. Google will now cover the cost for up to 500 workers at any U.S. business and values the grants at \$100,000 because people usually take up to six months to finish.

So, search for this, guys. This is Google's \$1000,000 Training Office — it's the Google Career Certificates. Search for it, get your employees to get more skills. It will help them grow and it will certainly help to grow your business.

Before I leave you, one final bit of news this week: Good news for mothers. Tennessee and South Carolina have now joined Louisiana, Michigan, Virginia, New Jersey, and Illinois in extending Medicaid and other health coverages from 60 days to 12 months for post-partem for new mothers.

The federal government is also working with another nine states and the District of Columbia to extend post-partem coverage for 12 months after pregnancy. These states include California, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. As a result of all the effort, as many as 720,000 parents across the United States could be guaranteed Medicaid and other health coverage after pregnancy.

Now, listen, Medicaid covers about 42% of all births in the nation. So, this new option for the states to extend Medicaid and health coverages is part of ongoing efforts at the federal level to address the disparities in maternal health outcomes by opening the door to post-partem care for hundreds and thousands of patients.

So, look at your states if they are participating in this program or follow more on what the federal government is doing to provide additional benefits for those mothers — those new mothers — who are suffering from post-partem depression. They could be well in addition to the benefits your health insurance provides, even if they're getting health insurance through you. Whatever coverage that you can make your employees aware of, again, will help them and will also help your business.

My name is Gene Marks and you've been listening to "On the Mark." This is our weekly podcast where we look at news and how it impacts your business. Thanks so much for visiting us. I hope that you have a great week and we will see you again next week. Take care.

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