[**Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion**](https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/task-force.htm)

***Department of Labor***

The Department of Labor Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion held a meeting on Nov 13, 2017. The Task Force’s mission is to identify strategies and proposals to promote apprenticeships, especially in sectors where apprenticeship programs are insufficient. This inaugural meeting was attended by a variety of industry sector professionals.

**Participants:**

* Chair – **Secretary Alexander Acosta**, U.S. Department of Labor
* Vice-Chair – **Secretary Betsy DeVos**, U.S. Department of Education
* Vice-Chair – **Secretary Wilbur Ross**, U.S. Department of Commerce
* **Ivanka Trump**, Senior Adviser to the President
* **Michael Bellaman**: President and CEO, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC)
* **Joshua Bolten**: President and CEO, Business Roundtable (BRT)
* **Walter G. Bumphus**: President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
* **Wesley G. Bush**: Chief Executive Officer and President, Northrup Grumman Corporation
* **Dennis Daugaard**: Governor of South Dakota
* **Emily DeRocco**: CEO, E3 Engage Educate Employ
* **Andrew Liveris**: Chairman and CEO, Dow Chemical Company
* **Douglas McCarron**: General President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC)
* **Sean McGarvey**: President, North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU)
* **Marc H. Morial**: President and CEO, National Urban League (NUL)
* **John Dezso Ratzenberger**: Actor and Entrepreneur
* **Kim Reynolds**: Governor of Iowa
* **Dawn Sweeney**: President and CEO, National Restaurant Association
* **Jay Timmons**: President and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)

Secretary Alexander Acosta

* Secretary Acosta explained that ultimately the goal of apprenticeships is to create and/or fill jobs.
* He highlighted a ‘skills gap’ that is preventing vacant jobs from being filled.
* He stated that the skills gap is an issue in both America, and other industrialized nations.
* The Secretary stated that is it clear the apprenticeship program is not working in its current form.
* The Secretary emphasized the need for citizens to be both lifelong learners, and earners.
* The Secretary stated that parental and student awareness of potential careers is key. The current awareness of career paths is very skewed towards college.

Secretary Betsy DeVos

* Secretary DeVos believes the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion is about finding solutions.
* She argues that educators and parents should not limit students by only suggesting a 4-year degree as a pathway to success.
* She argues that there are multiple pathways a student can take, and that students needed to be treated as individuals.
* She highlighted the Earn and Learn Program as deserving of praise.
* She stated that the Perkins Act and Perkins Reauthorisation meant the Government could assist in incentivising States and career education programs. However, she primarily wanted to encourage private sector participation.

Secretary Wilbur Ross

* Secretary Ross declared that the availability of key skills training, even whilst a student learns will be a focus of the Task Force.
* He argued apprenticeships remain a niche pathway for students.
* He believes this is primarily an issue for small businesses, and that they will benefit most from the apprenticeship expansion.
* He called on the Task Force to learn from Germany and Switzerland’s models.
* He challenged the Task Force to think how they could deliver this expansion on a national level.

Ivanka Trump

* Special Advisor Trump stated that the Executive Order on apprenticeships is an effort to fix the growing skills gap.
* She highlighted Computer Science and Information Technology are areas that are lacking the number of professionals needed.

Governor Kim Reynolds

* The Governor proposed the need to expose middle skilled jobs to young people.
* She highlighted Iowa’s employment fund as a good tool that can be replicated.
* She believes the biggest barrier in Iowa in regards to employment levels, is the skills shortage.

Joshua Bolten

* Mr. Bolten stated that he supports prior claims that an increase in skilled workers in the US is the biggest challenge the Task Force faces.
* He called for targeting apprenticeship programs in underrepresented sectors.
* He argued that a national network of business and industry would be beneficial.
* He called for an employer driven system.

Wesley G. Bush

* He highlighted how the pace of sector change in the US economy is rapid.
* He believes that businesses need to communicate their needs to the Task Force.
* He proposed partnerships between businesses and schools as a model with large scalability.

Andrew Liveris

* Mr. Liveris argued that the Internet of Things (IoT) impact on the economy would be limited.
* He said the demand for skilled workers is there, and that the supply side is lacking.
* He believes working with college community partners is key, and that a created curriculum could be followed.
* He proposed that retirees could become instructors for young people.
* Mr. Liveris stated that in order to achieve a successful apprenticeship expansion, extensive branding and marketing would be needed.
* He also stated that the Department of Labor registration process would need improvement.
* He explained that as industry digitises, the opportunity for accelerating improvement presents itself.

Sean McGarvey

* Mr. McGarvey believes women and veterans should be targeted just as much as students.
* He called for the apprenticeship expansion to ultimately provide family sustaining wages and jobs.

Douglas McCarron

* Mr. McCarron spoke about how the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners had centralised their training centre.
* He stated that the training centre was conducting hard skill, soft skill, technology and leadership training.

Marc H. Morial

* Mr. Morial questioned how the successes of programs were being monitored.
* He suggested high schools push for students to choose a variety of paths, not simply college.
* He stated the need for skill sets to be up to date in whatever profession.

Michael Bellaman

* Mr. Bellaman stressed the need to shift the paradigm and change people’s mindset about apprenticeships.

Governor Dennis Daugaard

* Mr. Daugaard suggested better career counselling in middle and high school.
* He cited the significant number of college students unable to finish or even make use of their degrees. They can look to apprenticeships.

Dawn Sweeney

* Ms. Sweeney stated the biggest challenge she faced is recruiting and training employees to an appropriate standard.
* She stated that she has invested heavily into the education environment, and that she introduced a notable program called ‘Pro Start’.

Jay Timmons

* Mr. Timmons stated how to best fill job vacancies:
  + The system implemented must be flexible. This means programs of different designed for specific regions, sectors and occupations.
  + It must be industry led, as this will shore up credibility and trust.
  + There must be an incentive structure for applying.

Walter G. Bumphus

* Mr. Bumphus explained how in his colleges, there are already work based programs. An example of this is a joint coding program with Apple, using Swift.

Emily DeRocco

* Ms. DeRocco stated the Task Force’s goal to be to provide nationally affordable, industry-recognised credentials.
* She supports the ideas of working and learning simultaneously, as well as focusing on youth engagement.

John Dezso Ratzenberger

* Mr. Ratzenberger argued that negative perceptions by the media, portraying working tradesmen as stupid had damaged public perception on apprenticeships.
* He proposed replicas of his young persons manufacturing summer program ‘Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs’.
* He highlighted the American Museum of Manufacturing and its ability to inspire.

**Summary**

The Secretary summarized the meeting by highlighting the following points:

* There is a need for greater career awareness provision in high school
* Higher education is interested in engaging, as students will benefit from the raised profile of apprenticeships.
* Flexibility is important, as a one size fits all approach does not work with so many different industries.
* The age of acceleration we live in requires both life long learners and earners.
* Industry must lead, or be a big partner, in the apprenticeship expansion.
* An incentive structure is needed.
* A registered apprentice model is not flexible enough and the barrier to entry in terms of regulation is too high.
* Each member of the Task Force should designate someone in their organisation to work regularly with the Department of Labor.