



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK *of* ATLANTA



CENTER FOR

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

# ASK US ANYTHING



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**WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

# ASK US ANYTHING SERIES

Initial Observations and Responses to COVID-19

**~WELCOME TO THE CONVERSATION~**



***Launched on October 2017***

**Mission:** Focus on employment policies and labor market issues that affect low- and moderate-income populations.

**Function:** Bridge between research and practice *across the entire Federal Reserve System*. Connect research, business and policymakers with innovative approaches to create economic opportunity through education and employment.

Fed resources on employment policies and labor market issues



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**[frbatlanta.org/cweo](http://frbatlanta.org/cweo)**





# Meet the CWEO Team



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# Tell Us a Little About You

Where are you joining  
us from?

What's your focus?



# Ask Us Anything Series: An Introduction

Regular sessions covering various topics focused on workforce supports, economic mobility and resilience.

Aim to be conversational. Light presentation, heavy discussion.

Bring your thoughts. Bring your insights. Bring your voice.

Shed light on challenges you're facing and solutions you're implementing.

We might not have all the answers. We are listening. We are responding through research, data and discussion. We will keep the conversation going.



# Today's Conversation

Frame for our conversation:

- What's been happening since March
- Affect on workers, workforce system and policy
- Forward facing responses and ideas
- Discuss challenges, solutions in development

Expert Insights:

- National, State and localized perspectives
- Focus on economic mobility and resilience
- Promising employment model and strategy
- What we need as we respond and move to recovery



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# What Are Your Priorities





## Socially Distant Discussions... We Know



We want this to be an open conversation



Have a question, comment, best practice to share? We want to hear it!



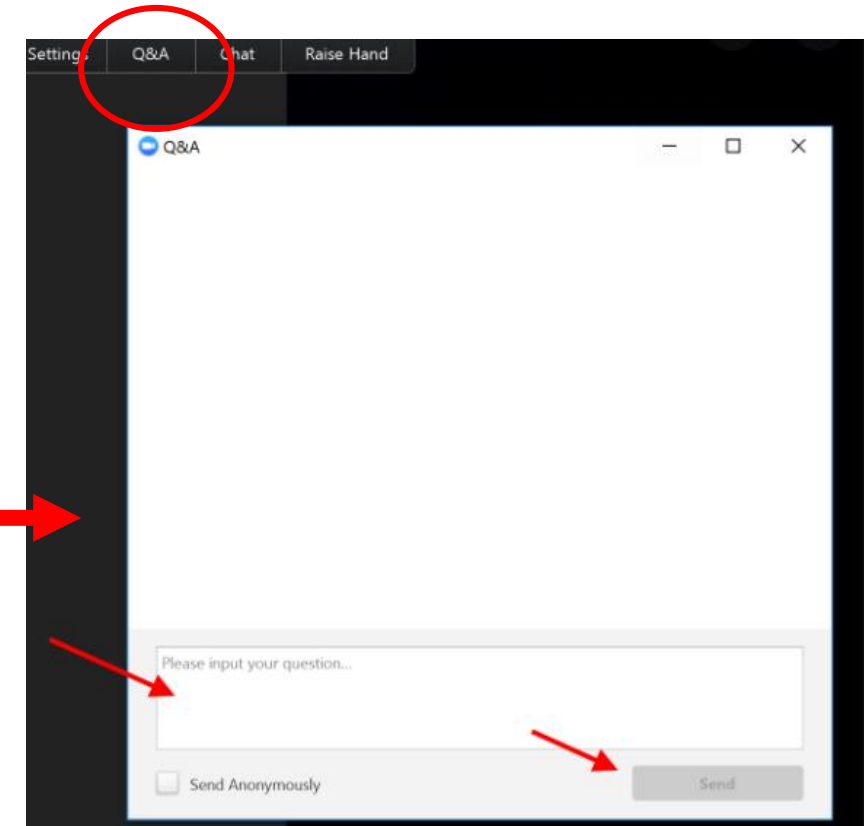
Please use the Q&A button at the top of your screen



We will do our best to answer your questions during the conversation



Recording and digest of Q&A will be provided





## Join Us Next Time(s)

New invitation / registrations will come out in advance of each session (every 3 weeks or so)

Please share priorities, suggestions and projects to showcase

Reach out to CWEO at any time





## Welcome Our Experts



Kermit Kaleba  
Managing Director of Policy  
National Skills Coalition  
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## Current State of Affairs

- COVID-19 having a profound effect on people, public health and economic stress. Causing unique and different effects on the labor market and workers
- Still likely too early to fully understand the extent of or duration of the impact, but the effects are likely to be large, and we are doing all we can to understand what is happening and how communities are responding.
- We are deepening existing outreach to community leaders, businesses, and policymakers. We want to stay informed about the evolving impacts across our country, especially in our low- and moderate-income neighborhoods that are most vulnerable to economic shocks.



# Legislative Action To Date

[Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act - 3/6/20](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act - 3/18/20](#)

[CARES Act - Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act - 3/27/20](#)

Expanded Unemployment Insurance:

- [FPUC - Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation](#)
- [PUA - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#)
- [Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation](#)

Business Supports:

- [EIDL - Economic Injury and Disaster Loan](#)
- [PPP - Paycheck Protection Program](#)



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Welcome Kermit Kaleba

~

National Skills Coalition

# **Workforce Development as part of Economic Recovery**

**Ask Us Anything Series: Initial Observations  
and Responses to COVID-19  
April 29, 2020**



**NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

# Responding to the Crisis Before Us

- ✓ **Remove all barriers to our nation's safety net – and invest in pathway to careers**
- ✓ **Provide comprehensive income, healthcare, and re-training support to all displaced workers**
- ✓ **Help small and mid-sized business avert layoffs, upskill current (and new) workforce**





# Responding to the Crisis Before Us

- ✓ **Address immediate shortages in industries needed to respond to crisis**
- ✓ **Update education and training policies to respond to marketplace disruption**
- ✓ **Create jobs – and skills training to ensure workers can take advantage of these new opportunities**



# Responding to the Crisis Before Us

- ✓ **Define, measure, and report on what's working and what's not for workers, businesses, and other stakeholders**



# For more information...

**Kermit Kaleba**

**[kermitk@nationalskillscoalition.org](mailto:kermitk@nationalskillscoalition.org)**

**National Skills Coalition's COVID-19 resource page:**

**<https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/covid19>**





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Welcome Julie Squire

~

National Association of State  
Workforce Agencies (NASWA)

# Unemployment Insurance and COVID-19

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Summary of Changes and NASWA Resources

# CARES Act - Major New Programs

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**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** - for individuals impacted by COVID-19 not eligible for regular or other UI, including self-employed.

**Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation** - 13 weeks of federally funded benefits added to the end of regular UI.

**Emergency Increase in Unemployment Compensation Benefits** - \$600 additional per week through July 31, 2020.

# New Short Term Compensation Provisions (also known as Work Share)

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## Temporary Financing of Short-Time Compensation Payments

100% federal funding for short-term compensation (STC) benefits.

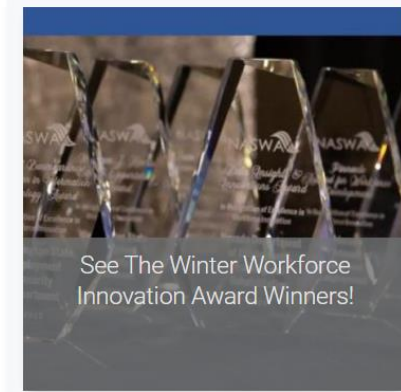
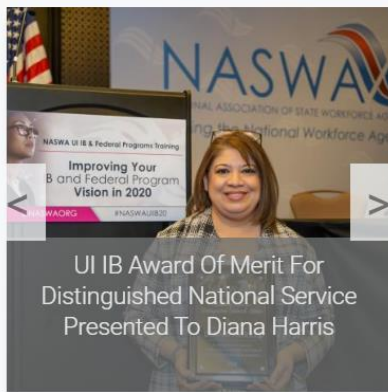
50% federal funding for STC programs NOT currently in state law.

More information on STC:

- <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/stc.asp>

# Resources on NASWA's Website

## [naswa.org](https://naswa.org)





# Questions?

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**Julie Squire**

Policy Director &  
General Counsel

[jsquire@naswa.org](mailto:jsquire@naswa.org)



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Welcome Kenyatta Lovett and Tyra Copas

~

TN Department of Labor and Workforce  
Development



The background image shows a rustic restaurant interior. It features long wooden tables and chairs arranged in rows. The walls are made of red brick, and the ceiling has exposed wooden beams and large, curved metal ductwork. Several pendant lights hang from the ceiling. In the background, there is a bar area with shelves of bottles and a menu board. Large windows on the right side provide natural light.

# TDLWD WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION

TENNESSEE TALENT EXCHANGE

TN





## Why is the Tennessee Talent Exchange, Powered By Jobs4TN Needed?

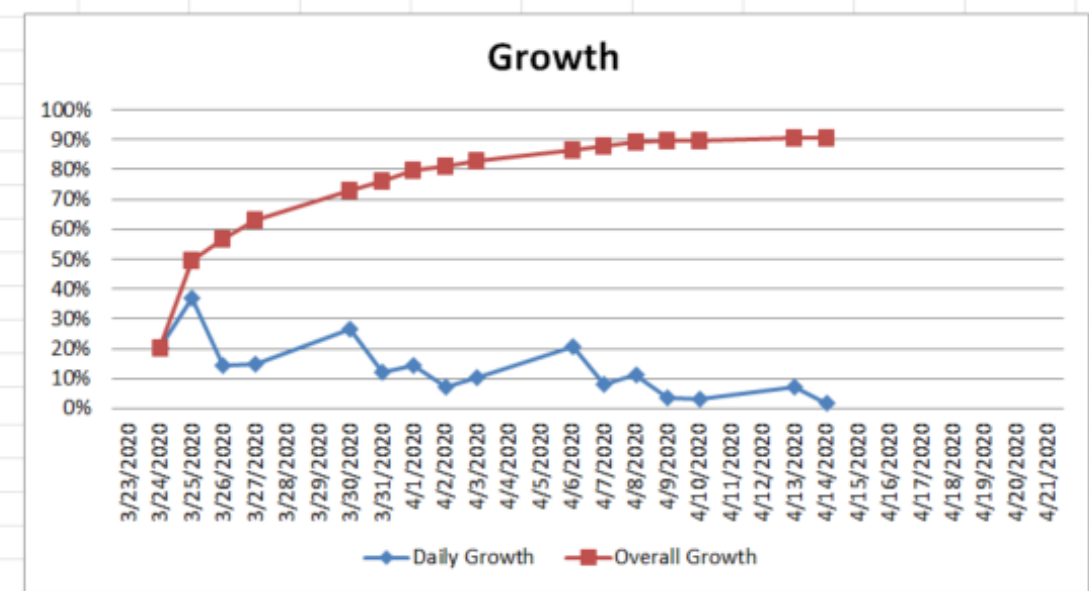
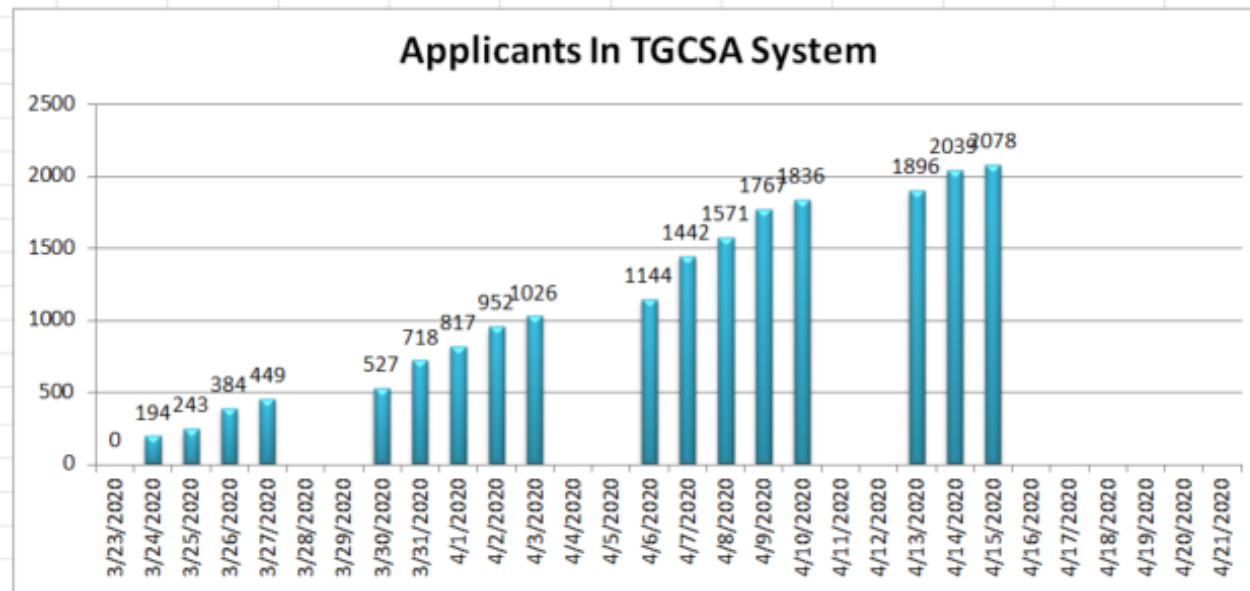
- New initiative to help transition workers from one industry in need of immediate employment to job opportunities in another industry that is current in need of an expanded workforce.
- Approximately 350,000 current employees in the hospitality sector (restaurants and hotels); looking at a 30%-40% reduction in staffing due to COVID-19
- Matching hours, schedule, and hopefully wages
- Leveraging transferrable skills
- Critical goals to reduce the downtime and economic impact on these individuals; offset the increasing growing numbers in unemployment

# CURRENT INDUSTRY PARTNERS & EMPLOYERS

- 3 Statewide Industry Associations
- Over 100 Employers
  - **Phase 1:** 15,000+ job postings
    - Food Retail
    - Logistics & Supply-Chain Management
  - **Phase II**
    - Healthcare
    - Information Technology

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PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT & POTENTIAL



## NEXT PHASE: Effective & Efficient Training Options

- Building a Framework for Measuring the Critical Gaps in Skills
- Short-term Credentials
- Work-based Learning Options
- Competency-based Education Courses

TN



# QUESTIONS

- [Tyra.Copas@tn.gov](mailto:Tyra.Copas@tn.gov)
- [Kenyatta.Lovett@tn.gov](mailto:Kenyatta.Lovett@tn.gov)







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# Let's Chat



# Resource Center

## [Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta COVID-19 Resources](#)

- Includes all Atlanta Fed Publications
- Resources from other Agencies
- Overview of Monetary Policy Actions

## **Other Atlanta Fed Resources**

[Community and Economic Development Publications and Partners Update](#)

[Human Capital Labor Insights](#)

[EconomyNOW App](#)

[Policy Hub](#)

## **Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity**

[Workforce Currents](#)

[Opportunity Occupations Monitor](#)

[Investing in America's Workforce](#)

Much More...





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# Q&A Digest

# ASK US ANYTHING

## Initial Observations and Responses to COVID-19 Webinar on April 29, 2020 Q&A Digest

The comments included are made by Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity staff Sarah Miller and Stuart Andreason, along with our panelists, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta or the Federal Reserve System.

### Public workforce system and unemployment insurance

#### Accelerating automation in the workplace?

The long-term effects of COVID-19 on physical working environments are still unknown, especially related to how significant this pandemic will accelerate automation in the workplace. In the near term, it's reasonable to expect reduced on-site staff and operations to ensure safety. Currently, the workforce and unemployment systems have had to increase the automation of their services, and training programs are quickly shifting their curriculum, when appropriate, to online and automated modules. Programs that aim to upskill and transition workers into career pathways with higher probability of weathering the economic downturn and the future of work should be vetted with business and industry to mitigate any risk of automation in the near term.

#### Increase filing for unemployment insurance (UI) due to additional emergency compensation

Historically, according to an estimate by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, roughly 74 percent of workers who are unemployed do not file a claim, particularly because they think they are not eligible for the financial support. During this pandemic, given the massive business closures and temporary layoffs, there is reasonable evidence to suggest far more people are, in fact, filing for unemployment. Data on what percentage of those who *could* file but *didn't* will not be clear for some time, as the job loss and UI data continue to be collected through the economic recovery.

The Atlanta Fed's Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity created a dashboard to track weekly unemployment claims. The [Unemployment Claims Monitor](#) displays data from the weekly and monthly unemployment claims reports from the U.S. Department of Labor. It is updated every Thursday.

Users will find weekly and monthly data on claims and on who has filed for unemployment insurance, including special unemployment programs like Short-Time Compensation (or Workshare), Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees, Ex-Service Members, and Extended Benefits programs. *Two weeks of CARES Act's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program that covers gig workers and 1099 employee data are available and included in the Unemployment Claims Monitor.*

#### Pursuing training while collecting UI

Persons collecting unemployment insurance are eligible for a number of training programs offered through the public workforce system and WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) skills training.

#### Claiming UI when states lift shelter-in-place orders

This is an open question and a concern to many. In some cases, short-time compensation programs or partial unemployment programs could offer a bridge to ensure all wages/financial supports are not lost when businesses begin to open at reduced operations. The Atlanta Fed is working with policy organizations nationally and within certain states to identify ways to ensure worker safety and financial security as many states begin to lift shelter-in-place orders and reopen certain sectors.

## **CARES PUA funding for gig workers**

The new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) through the CARES Act offers extended time frames to claim UI and offers this financial assistance to 1099 and gig workers. Claim information on these workers has not been released by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) yet, but is expected shortly. Once the data are available, there will be greater insight into who is filing claims (demographic data are expected to be included in this release from DOL).

## **Recommendations/program changes to WIOA and other federal training programs that would lead to better outcomes**

Legislation was introduced on Friday, May 1, for increased workforce funding through the Relaunching America's Workforce Act (RAWA). Many national organizations have contributed to this draft legislation and it represents a significant investment in the workforce system along the lines of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The National Skills Coalition and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies have commented on the proposed legislation and you can read their statements here:

[NASWA Statement on Introduction of Relaunching America's Workforce Act](#)

[National Skills Coalition Blog on RAWA](#)

## **Workplace safety and equity**

### **Standard training for health and safety during reopening; cleanliness protocols and their effect on ensuring trust between consumers and employees for proper return to business**

Lengthy discussions have occurred on a national, state, and local level about responsibly and safely reopening businesses. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines have been issued in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. Furthermore, for states that have begun phasing for reopening, such as Alabama, public guidance has been issued on what the various phasing of business reopenings mean for the employers, employees, and consumers. Links to both sets of guidelines are included below. All regions and firms are encouraged to follow these guidelines as they consider reopening for business.

[OSHA Guidelines on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[Reopen Alabama Responsibly Phase One Guidance](#)

## **National Skills Coalition (NSC)**

### **Job creation proposals under consideration.**

Two areas were highlighted in NSC's comments. The first was discussion on including infrastructure investments in a recovery package. That package would focus on standard infrastructure investments such as road improvements, bridge building, and investing in broadband and energy. The second was discussion with public health agencies looking to hire positions for contact tracing jobs and investment in training to prepare people with the skills to conduct this work. In all cases, the goal is to create meaningful access to these jobs and training opportunities to develop the skills that will prepare the workforce to fill the positions effectively.

## National Association of State Workforce Agencies

### **Limited uptake on Short-Time Compensation programs to mitigate job loss when help is available to states?**

Some states are actively working to improve uptake. Other states, especially those without Short-Time Compensation (STC) programs, have prioritized implementation of the new federal UI programs (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation). U.S. Department of Labor guidance on expanding STC under the CARES Act was released on May 3, see [USDOL STC Guidance](#). Once states have fully implemented the new UI programs, more states will likely focus on STC.

## Tennessee Talent Exchange

### **Employers providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe working environments.**

To date, no concerns have been raised indicating employers have a shortage of PPE for their employees.

### **Are employers actually sharing workers? Or is the goal for a permanent transition to new industries?**

In the first phase of the Tennessee Talent Exchange program, the goal was to transition individuals who were laid off or being laid off from the hospitality industry to temporary positions in the grocery/retail industry. The plan is to provide a path for individuals to return to their previous jobs, once COVID-19 subsides. Phase two involves training and upskilling to assist individuals who wish to move into a permanent and more sustainable career.

### **Are computer skills a big barrier behind more people not signing up for job matching in Tennessee?**

To date, there have not been reports that computer skills are creating a barrier to connect under the Tennessee Talent Exchange.

### **Are there efforts to promote the awarding of some sort of nondegree credential to those who take such training, preferably credentials with proven market value?**

In phase two, efforts are under way to identify growing and/or high-demand positions and assist with breaking down barriers for individuals to obtain the credentials needed for these positions in a compressed and online format. Specifically, the program is currently working to identify certifications in the health care field such as medical assistant and medical coder.

### **In addition to transitioning workers to similar industries and wages, does the Tennessee program also plan on services to upskill workers?**

Yes, the program is working with the college systems in the state to identify training pathways. The program is partnering with apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, and professional development/workforce training opportunities.

### **Any estimate on how much money this initiative has saved employers in paying unemployment benefits?**

The focus thus far has been placing the individuals, with the data analytics framework to be developed later. Over the next few months, the program will begin reviewing impact costs of the efforts and will share results then.

### **Description of short-term credentials**

Short-term credentials can be defined as anything from a few-week certification to an accelerated two-year degree, with a focus on allowing participants to qualify for immediate job opportunities.