

- Department of Labor (DOL) registration; and
- costs related to critical skills RAP design and launch, such as:
 - curricula development;
 - related instruction or training for apprentices (in-person, online, or hybrid);
 - training supplies for apprentices;
 - instructor costs or mentor activities and other identified requests based on employer needs, as allowable; and
 - other identified requests based on employer needs, as allowable.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends continuing to fund the Critical Skills Apprenticeship Initiative, as laid out above, using \$2 million in WIOA statewide funds.

3. **Workforce Development Response to Funding to pay for exams and/or licensure/credential assistance, funding Boards to connect jobseekers with newly acquired credentials to employers, and establishing a fund to pay for costs associated with credentials issued as a result of CTE coursework:** Staff makes two recommendations for assistance with costs associated with exams and licensure/credentials, connecting jobseekers with employers, and establishing a fund to pay for costs associated with credentials issued as a result of CTE.

Recommendation 1

Staff recommends providing Boards with \$1.5 million of combined WIOA and TANF funding to pay for exam and/or licensure or credential fees for middle skills jobseekers who require financial assistance and then to connect those middle skills jobseekers who have newly acquired credentials to employers with job openings in their workforce areas. Local staff will determine the funding source to use based on specific characteristics of each individual served. Each of the 28 Boards will receive a distribution and use the funds to cover costs associated with exams, credentials, and licenses resulting from CTE coursework and to pay staffing costs for connecting the job seekers with middle skills jobs. To administer the program, Boards will partner with training providers, nonprofit entities, community programs, and other state agencies that provide middle skills occupations training and certifications.

Recommendation 2

Staff recommends providing an additional \$1 million in WIOA funds, using a competitive application process, for Boards to address the specific needs of rural areas that are defined as municipalities with a population of less than 25,000 and unincorporated areas of counties with a population of less than 200,000. The funds will be used to pay for exam and/or licensure or credential fees for middle skills jobseekers who require financial assistance and then to connect those middle skills jobseekers who have newly acquired credentials to employers with job openings in their workforce areas.