

Skills for America's Future: Background and Activities

Skills for America's Future is an employer-led, non-partisan partnership of businesses and community colleges. The goal of *Skills for America's Future* is to help connect employers to community colleges and workforce partners so that community college students are better equipped with the skills necessary to find and retain jobs in a 21st century economy. This effort—instituted to address the dual problems of high unemployment and the difficulty many employers face in finding workers with the right skills—is an independent initiative of the Aspen Institute.

Announced by President Obama in October 2010, *Skills for America's Future* shows how private sector employers and community colleges can lead the way in helping the American economy become more competitive. At its launch, the President recognized that “the most successful community colleges are those that partner with the private sector.”

Skills for America's Future strives to improve the preparedness and competitiveness of American workers and the ability of businesses to recruit talent efficiently and effectively. Leading companies such as Discovery Communications, Accenture, Gap, Inc., McDonalds, Motorola Solutions, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, UPS and United Technologies Corporation and organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers have already committed to partnerships through the initiative and are either undertaking or expanding partnerships with community colleges to help students acquire important skills.

By bringing together corporations, community colleges, labor unions, community-based organizations and other workforce partners, *Skills for America's Future* allows these groups to better connect, coordinate, and identify opportunities for leveraging and scaling effective models. Specific activities include:

- ✓ Providing a national voice on the effectiveness of public/private partnerships
- ✓ Improving the skills, industry-recognized credentials, and employment outcomes of workers and students
- ✓ Helping to convene businesses, education leaders, labor unions, community-based organizations and policymakers
- ✓ Offering resources on developing effective partnerships
- ✓ Sharing knowledge and lessons learned among employers
- ✓ Initiating high-impact partnerships between employers and community colleges
- ✓ Promoting the importance of having a strong postsecondary educational system so that the nation has a brighter economic future

For more information about Skills for America's Future, visit: www.skillsforamericasfuture.org. To arrange an interview about the effort or with a committed employer, please contact: Karen Elzey, director, at (202) 736-1079 or karen.elzey@aspeninstitute.org.