

2014 Workforce Policy Agenda

Building on Smart Investments in Iowa's Workforce and Industries

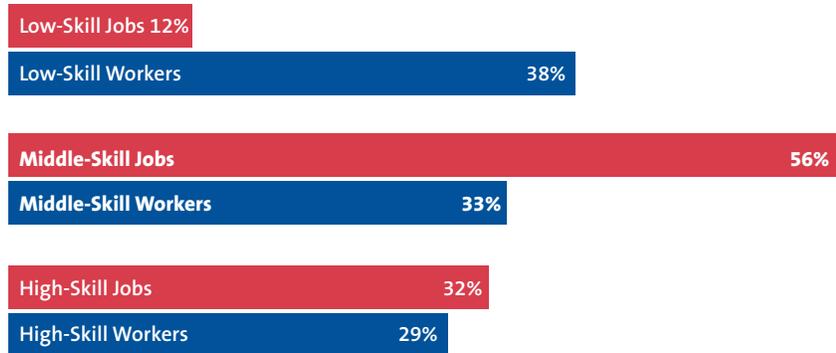
Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition



Workforce Challenges Still Facing Iowa

Middle-skill jobs still make up the majority of the jobs in Iowa's labor market. Yet, only 33 percent of working Iowans likely have the skills and credentials for these types of jobs.

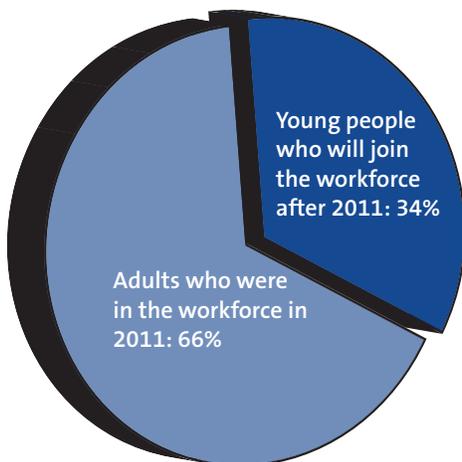
Iowa's Jobs by Skill Level, 2012



Source: Labor Force and Occupational Analysis Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development

What's more, two-thirds of Iowa's workforce in 2025 will have already been working since 2012. Iowa cannot just depend on youth and young adults to close the skills gap. Adults must be part of the state's education strategy.

Iowa's 2025 Workforce



Source: Labor Force and Occupational Analysis Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development



Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition 2014 Policy Agenda

The Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition applauds Governor Branstad and the state legislature for making \$10.5 million in new investments for Adult Basic Education and Pathways for Academic Career and Employment (PACE) programs. This funding will help more adults build basic skills and enter credit-bearing college programs; pathway navigators to ensure students enrolled in education and training pathway programs complete these programs; and regional industry sector partnerships so employers, educators, and other community stakeholders can work collaboratively to develop industry-focused career pathways and workforce training programs.

This new funding will also provide an opportunity to ensure that the investment achieves its intended outcome: train more workers for Iowa's key industries. To do this, the Governor and state legislature should take additional steps to measure the impacts of these investments, expand supportive services for adult learners so they can finish adult basic education and PACE programs on time, build additional pathways for the hardest to employ to return to the labor market, and ensure fiscal year 2014 investments in skills become part of Iowa's long-term plan for growing its economy with a better trained workforce.

For these reasons, Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition offers these policy recommendations for the 2014 state legislative session.

Recommendation 1 – Maintain funding at \$10.5 million for adult basic education, PACE programs, pathway navigators and industry sector partnerships and expand funding for apprenticeship opportunities in a wider variety of sectors.

- Continue funding adult basic education and integrated learning programs at the level of \$5.5 million in the Department of Education's FY 2015 budget in an effort to increase the number of students that enroll and complete these programs.
- Maintain \$5 million in state revenue as part of annual higher education funding allocations for FY 2015 to support PACE programs, pathway navigators, and regional industry sector partnerships.
- Support increased growth and funding of registered apprenticeship opportunities in the state of Iowa, particularly for career paths that require middle skills.

Recommendation 2 – Create a permanent line in the Department of Education budget for the Iowa Education Outcomes Initiative and provide an ongoing appropriation of \$500,000 for the initiative.

- Encourage the Department of Education to track middle-skill credentials earned, such as associate degrees, occupational certificates or industry certificates, as well as job placement data through programs such as: the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Vocational Rehabilitation, Carl D. Perkins Act, and Adult Basic Education (ABE); and through community-based organizations, labor-management training partnerships, private career schools, state-funded workforce and training, and apprenticeship programs.

This data will ensure that investments in job training match the available jobs in key industries.

- Establish a committee led by the Department of Education and comprised of other relevant state agencies related to apprenticeships, economic development, corrections, human services, and workforce development as well as community colleges, human services and intermediary organizations. This committee should advise the initiative's efforts to building tracking systems, collect data, and link existing databases to create a comprehensive picture of educational attainment, job placement, and wages of Iowa's workforce.

Iowa must have accurate job and wage data to ensure skill-building investments match market demand.



Recommendation 3 – Leverage public-private partnerships to expand access to supportive services and help more Iowans complete adult basic education and skills training programs and maintain gainful employment.

- Enhance access to child care for low-income working parents by extending state child care assistance eligibility from the current six months to one year. Allow eligibility for full-time child care to parents who pursue a combination of work, education and job training.
- Pass legislation and appropriate \$1 million to create the Iowa Employment Rides Initiative to provide Iowans reliable transportation to complete education and training programs and maintain gainful employment. The initiative facilitates local public-private partnerships to expand public transportation options through an initial appropriation of \$1 million that is leveraged by local resources.
- Secure a commitment from the Iowa Department of Human Services to participate more fully in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance — Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) “50-50” program. Fifty percent of the state’s expenses for supportive services of SNAP E&T eligible Iowans could be reimbursed by the US Department of Agriculture. Iowa is currently only accessing a fraction of the reimbursement available.

Recommendation 4 - Invest in high school equivalency test preparation, vocational training, and supportive services for incarcerated individuals who are soon to be released.

- Fund \$250,000 to the Department of Corrections to hire instructors for adult literacy and high school equivalency test preparation.
- Fund instructors, equipment and program costs for vocational training programs associated with in-demand industry sectors such as information technology, advanced manufacturing, construction, energy, and logistics in accordance with these industries’ skill standards at a level of \$1 million.
- Implement prison-based, cognitive behavior programs to prepare inmates for success in education programs and employment upon release. Fund \$250,000 to Department of Corrections.

Reduction in Recidivism by Intervention



Recidivism reduction is the percentage decrease in recidivism rates for offenders going through the program compared with similar offenders who did not receive the program. Source: Iowa Department of Corrections

Moving Iowa Forward

Now is the time to ensure these investments are effective in closing the state’s skills gap and equipping Iowans with the skills needed for today’s labor market. By enacting these recommendations, Iowa will be able to measure the impacts of this new funding, graduate more adults from education and training programs and help them maintain gainful employment, and bring opportunity to those individuals often locked out of the labor market.

About the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition

The Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition is a statewide partnership of Iowa’s business, community, education, legislative, and workforce development leaders that serve as an organized voice for “skills” at the state’s capitol and build more policymaker support for state policies that grow Iowa’s economy by investing in its workforce.

Recidivism decreases by up to 24% when interventions such as high school equivalency completion, vocational education and soft skills training are implemented in prison. For every tax dollar spent on correctional education, there is a nearly 300% return on investment. There is a 400% return on investment for vocational education.

Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition

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To learn more about the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition, visit www.centraliowaworks.org.

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