

Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition Policy Agenda

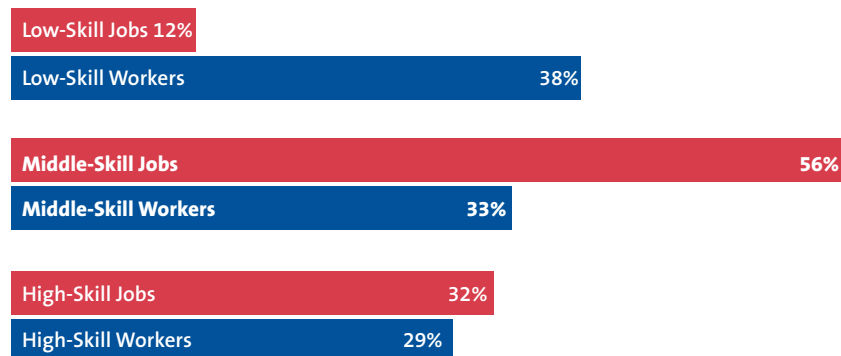
Closing Iowa's Skills Gap and Building Pathways
to Good Jobs and Economic Security for all Iowans



Iowa's Growing Workforce Challenges

Iowa's Jobs by Skill Level, 2011

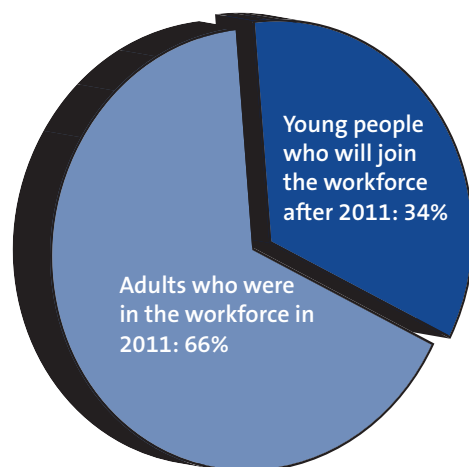
Iowa's economic demand for skilled workers is strong and will remain strong for the foreseeable future. Middle-skill jobs already make up the majority of the jobs in the state's labor market. Yet, only 33 percent of working Iowans likely have the skills and credentials for these types of jobs.



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

Iowa's Workforce of Tomorrow is in the Workforce Today

What's more, two-thirds of Iowa's workforce in 2025 will have already been working since 2011. Iowa cannot just depend on youth and young adults to close the skills gap. Adults must be part of the state's education strategy.



Source: Prepared by Labor Force and Occupational Analysis Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development
Note: Population projections were obtained from Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.



Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition Policy Agenda

The Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition calls on Iowa's policymakers to enact these recommendations to close Iowa's skills gap and put more Iowans on educational pathways to good jobs and economic security:

1 *Appropriate \$5 million in state revenue for adult basic education and integrated learning programs, which combine literacy skill development with job training, to help more low-skill adult workers get on a path toward earning postsecondary credentials and having the necessary skills for employment.*

- ◆ Secure \$5 million in state revenue for the Iowa Department of Education to increase the percentage of eligible students served by adult basic education and integrated learning programs from the current three percent to ten percent.

2 *Invest in the use of pathway navigators at a level of \$2 million to ensure adult learners enrolled in career pathways programs complete these programs and earn skilled credentials.*

- ◆ Allocate funding in the amount of \$2 million for the purposes of staffing pathway navigators to work with students enrolled in career pathways programs. These navigators would provide service and support coordination, including but not limited to education and workforce training, helping students make childcare and transportation arrangements or get tutorial assistance.
- ◆ Use a portion of the state's federal allocation of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to fund pathway navigators to serve TANF-eligible students enrolled in community college bridge programs or other approved training organizations.

3 *Create capacity within existing postsecondary education and job training funding to develop regional industry sector partnerships around the state.*

- ◆ Delineate partners, activities, and outcomes for establishing industry sector partnerships in each community college district as part of annual higher education funding allocations. Such partnerships would be formed for the purposes of aligning resources, advising current education and training programs, and developing additional skill-building strategies for a targeted industry cluster.

4 *Ensure Iowa's education and workforce development system has the capacity to evaluate the impact of its initiatives and programs on closing skill gaps in key industries and counting numbers of credentials earned by workers through these efforts.*

- ◆ Reinstate funding for the Iowa Education Outcomes Initiative at a level of \$500,000 annually.
- ◆ Implement a new component of this work whereby the Department of Education and Iowa Workforce Development count the number of skilled credentials or certificates, both credit and non-credit, earned by Iowa's residents on an annual basis that correspond to jobs already being assessed for projected growth by the Iowa Education Outcomes Initiative.



A Smart Bet: Investing in Iowa's Adult Workforce

- ◆ At least 60 percent of its workforce, ages 25–65, should have a postsecondary degree by 2025 for the state to remain globally competitive. Iowa will need to produce an additional 108,807 degrees to meet this threshold.¹
- ◆ Yet, more than 289,280 working age Iowans have not completed high school or obtained a GED.²
- ◆ An appropriation of \$5 million in FY 13 in adult basic education and related programs would have a net value of \$25,842,030, and a rate of return of 24 percent. Iowa gets all its funding back plus an additional \$20,842,030 million for the appropriation.³

Moving Iowa Forward

By enacting these policy recommendations, Iowa's education and workforce development systems will reflect the realities of the 21st-century economy and workforce and, more importantly, will ensure the state realizes its full economic potential.

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 capital and build more policymaker support for state policies that grow Iowa's economy by investing in its workforce.

Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition

AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy)
Central Iowa Works
Iowa Association of Business and Industry
Iowa Association of Community College Presidents
Iowa Council of Foundations
National Skills Coalition
United Ways of Iowa
United Way of East Central Iowa
United Way of Central Iowa

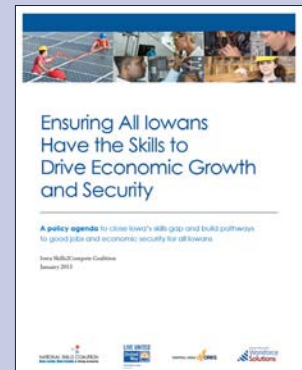
Endnotes

- 1 Center for Law and Social Policy. Iowa: The Public Return to Increasing Postsecondary Credential Attainment. Available at: http://www.clasp.org/postsecondary/publication?id=1392&list=publications_states. (Washington DC 2012).
- 2 GED Testing Service. 2011 GED Statistical Report. Available at: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/4176ab251366d3ccfb4e94a9a888e67a.pdf>. (Washington DC, 2011).
- 3 This assumes a conservative 10-year working career for GED recipients and an earnings increase of \$4,390 per year, as calculated by the 2002 U.S. Census.

Acknowledgments

The paper was authored by the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition led by Central Iowa Works and the United Way of Central Iowa with editing and technical assistance provided by the National Skills Coalition. Funding to support its development was provided by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Central Iowa Works.

Information and support have also been provided by the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Workforce Development, and Iowa Economic Development Authority.



To learn more about the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition, and download a complete copy of the Coalition's policy agenda, *Ensuring All Iowans Have the Skills to Drive Economic Growth and Security*, visit www.centraliowaworks.org or contact:

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