



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 30, 2011

CONTACT:

Rachel Unruh
Associate Director
National Skills Coalition
773-263-8678
rachelu@nationalskillscoalition.org

**NSC, SFA, NFWS, CVWF Announce Business Leaders United
at Clinton Global Initiative America Meeting**

**With Local Skills Shortages Stalling Economic Recovery, Employers will Help Shape
National Skills Strategy**

CHICAGO, IL – This morning, at CGI America, a meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), National Skills Coalition, [Skills for America's Future](#), [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#), and [Corporate Voices for Working Families](#) announced the creation of Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships, an initiative to bring diverse business leaders together to help shape a national skills strategy that can address structural skill shortages that are putting the brakes on economic recovery and job creation.

NSC's executive director Andy Van Kleunen announced the Commitment to Action on behalf of the four organizations during the event's workforce development session. CGI Commitments to Action are new, specific, and measurable plans to address job creation challenges in the U.S. Business Leaders United was one of several Commitments to Action announced during President Clinton's convening of business, government, and civic leaders to focus on economic recovery and job growth.

The [Joyce Foundation](#) announced today that it will be the first member of the philanthropic community to invest in the Business Leaders United Commitment to Action. "Job creation and job training strategies must go hand in hand," said Joyce Foundation President Ellen S. Alberding. "That won't happen unless business leaders are at the table shaping workforce policy. Business Leaders United has identified concrete measurable goals to help ensure public workforce training investments are targeted at the jobs that will be part of our post-recession economy.

- more -

Industry partnerships are a specific workforce training model led by local employers in collaboration with colleges, community organizations, public workforce boards, and unions. This model has compiled a track record of success. Business Leaders United will:

- Expand the number of these partnerships by more than 30 percent across 50 states.
- Facilitate conversations between local business leaders and federal policymakers about how private, philanthropic, and public dollars can be leveraged to replicate and sustain these partnerships nationally.

Employer partners from the national organizations spearheading Business Leaders United are applauding the announcement of the Commitment to Action.

“We need to make sure America has a 21st century workforce that is equipped with the training and capabilities necessary to be successful, to get ahead, and to drive a competitive economy in the challenges of a global marketplace,” said Eva Sage-Gavin, Executive Vice President of Global Human Resources and Corporate Affairs for Gap, Inc. and an Advisory Board Member of Skills for America’s Future, which seeks to promote partnerships between community colleges and businesses. “Business Leaders United will bring essential voices to the table to ensure we can grow the skilled workforce of the future today.”

“Those of us who work in industry partnerships understand the power they generate, particularly for small and mid-sized employers, to address local skill needs,” said Michael Mandina of Optimax Systems, Inc. in Ontario, New York and a member of National Skills Coalition’s employer network. “We need to have a national policy conversation about how to better support this proven strategy and close local skill gaps. I look forward to working with Business Leaders United to shape that conversation.”

Supporting industry partnerships through public policy will help address the skill shortages that are putting the brakes on economic recovery.

“In order to better realize long-term economic recovery, we need to close the gap between untapped talent and entry level workforce needs,” said Patrick Flavin, AVP Director of Workforce Initiatives for The TJX Companies, Inc. and a member of the Corporate Voices for Working Families network.

“Investing in our workforce is a ‘win’ for our company and a ‘win’ for our community,” said Pete Strange, CEO of Messer Construction and a member of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions network. “The future competitiveness of our company depends on our ability to attract and develop talent. And the future vitality of our community depends on our collective ability to grow the skills of our workforce so people can obtain gainful employment.”

###

About the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) and CGI America

CGI America is a new Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) event focused on developing ideas for fostering economic recovery in the U.S. Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, CGI convenes global leaders to devise and implement innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. Since 2005, CGI Annual Meetings have brought together nearly 150 current and former heads of state, 18 Nobel Prize laureates, hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations, major philanthropists, directors of the most effective nongovernmental organizations, and prominent members of the media. These CGI members have made nearly 2,000 commitments, which have already improved the lives of 300 million people in more than 180 countries. When fully funded and implemented, these commitments will be valued in excess of \$63 billion. The 2011 Annual Meeting will take place Sept. 19-22 in New York City. The CGI community also includes CGI U, which hosts an annual meeting for undergraduate and graduate students, and CGI Lead, which engages a select group of young CGI members for leadership development and collective commitment-making.