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New Analysis: Indiana Employers Struggle to Fill Key Jobs
Coalition calls for General Assembly to support Workforce Ready Grants to help close growing middle-skill gap

Washington, DC – According to a new report issued by the National Skills Coalition, employers in Indiana face a shortage of sufficiently trained workers to fill middle-skill jobs. These jobs, which require training beyond high school but not a four-year degree, make up the largest part of America’s labor market. In Indiana, middle-skill jobs account for 58 percent of the labor market, but only 47 percent of the state’s workers have the training to fill these positions.

“This skills gap keeps the Indiana economy from growing, Indiana employers from hiring, and Indiana residents from improving their job prospects and earning more,” said Brooke DeRenzis, State Network Director at National Skills Coalition. “There are many people who want a good job but need more education and training to get on a pathway toward a family supporting middle-skill job.

The Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition, a bipartisan coalition of state legislators, education policymakers, business, labor and community leaders, is seeking to close the state’s skills gap. “This new data confirms that increasing middle-skill training is crucial to strengthening Indiana’s economy and providing a pathway to economic self-sufficiency for Hoosier families through high-wage, high-demand jobs” says Coalition Co-Chair Rep. Ed Clere, District 72.

Employer demand for workers with middle-skill training remains strong as well. “Some 55 percent of the state’s projected openings through 2024 will be for middle-skill jobs. Indiana will need to continue to work to skill up its workforce in order to meet that robust demand,” says Caryl
Auslander, Vice President of Education and Workforce Development at the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

Indiana’s “middle-skill gap” has widened since this data was last analyzed. In 2013, 54 percent of jobs in Indiana were classified as middle skill; and 47 percent of Hoosiers had the skills and credentials for these jobs. Because an increasing number of jobs require middle skills but the number of Hoosiers who possess these skills remains flat, state investment in middle-skill training is more crucial than ever in order to move Indiana's economy forward.

The Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition is asking the General Assembly to help close Indiana’s skills gap by supporting proposed Workforce Ready Grants in HB 1008. The proposed grants would help workers earn middle-skill workforce credentials and certificates so they can compete for good-paying jobs in high-demand fields. The proposal is the product of a partnership by Governor Eric Holcomb and Coalition members the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

The Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition also encourages the Assembly to increase investments that are already proven to produce in-demand middle-skill credentials, including the WorkINdiana adult education program that combines high school equivalency diplomas with industry-recognized credentials; as well as the Adult Student Grant that provides aid for part-time adults participating in the state’s popular ‘You Can Go Back’ initiative to complete degrees and credentials. In addition, the Coalition urges the state to report on the current landscape of adult literacy and foundational skill programs currently offered throughout the state, and to act on the results to increase job-driven adult reading and math literacy services that provide the first rung on the ladder to further middle-skill training.

See the new middle-skill data for Indiana and all 50 states at: http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/fact-sheets

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The Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition is made up of a bipartisan group of state legislators as well as education policymakers, business, labor, and community leaders that have come together with the aim of closing Indiana’s skills gap and serving as a resource for policymakers working toward that end. The Coalition uses research and data to promote public policies that will bring greater awareness to and help match the skills of Indiana’s workers with the demands its workforce.

National Skills Coalition is a broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.