

The Role of Immigrant Integration in Meeting Our Skilled Workforce Needs

May 2014

The Problem: Meeting Labor Market Demand

There will be 55 million job openings in the economy through 2020. At the current production rate, the U.S. will fall short by 5 million workers with necessary postsecondary education and credentials.

- 24 million openings from newly created jobs and 31 million openings due to baby boom retirements.
- 2/3 of all job openings in the next decade will require education beyond a high school degree.

The Solution: Investing in the Immigrant Workforce

- Between 2000 and 2050 new immigrants and their children will account for 83 percent of the growth in the working-age population. Without the immigrant population, the U.S. workforce will be insufficient to replace the workers expected to retire from the labor force between 2010 and 2030.
- At least part of the solution to the middle skills gap will be the investments in education and occupational training programs for the immigrant workforce that lead to industry recognized certificates or credentials.

The Challenge: Disconnected Policies

Current policies are not assisting immigrants in acquiring the skills they need to obtain the middle skill jobs that are in demand now and in the future.

The policy conversations around immigration reform and workforce development are largely disconnected:

- Senate CIR bill created new employment, language/civics, and education and training requirements that will completely overwhelm existing resources and infrastructure.
- DREAM Act doesn't reflect technical and occupational training—the most likely path into the labor market for many immigrant youth.
- DACA allows occupation training for out-of-school youth, but without work authorization immigrants ineligible for many federally funded training programs.

The Opportunity: Education and Reform

There is an opportunity to educate policy makers at all levels of government, lift up best practices, and engage the Administration including Departments of Education and Labor and the White House on the need to develop policies and invest in programs that fully integrate immigrant workers.

