

The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary

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## **President Obama to Announce Launch of Skills for America's Future**

### **Program will Create Job Training Partnerships in all 50 States**

WASHINGTON -- Today at a meeting of the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board (PERAB), President Obama will announce the launch of *Skills for America's Future*, a new, industry-led initiative to dramatically improve industry partnerships with community colleges and build a nation-wide network to maximize workforce development strategies, job training programs, and job placement.

**President Obama** said, "We want to make it easier to join students looking for jobs with businesses looking to hire. We want to put community colleges and employers together to create programs that match curricula in the classroom with the needs of the boardroom. *Skills for America's Future* would help connect more employers, schools, and other job training providers, and help them share knowledge about what practices work best. The goal is to ensure there are strong partnerships between growing industries and community college or training programs in every state in the country."

Building on the success and example of the "Educate to Innovate" campaign to increase science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning, *Skills for America's Future* will facilitate industry partnerships with community colleges and other training providers in support of the President's goal of 5 million more community college graduates and certificates by 2020. *Skills for America's Future* will build high-impact partnerships with industry, labor unions, community colleges and other training providers in all 50 states.

In addition, the President will also announce the establishment of a federal *Skills for America's Future* Task Force, co-chaired by top-level administration policymakers, to coordinate federal efforts and ensure the private sector is best poised to work with and leverage federal training and education efforts.

*Skills for America's Future* already has the commitment of leaders, such as Penny Pritzker (Chairman/CEO, Pritzker Realty Group) and Walter Isaacson (CEO, Aspen Institute), to advance this effort. In addition, leading companies, including PG&E, Gap Inc, McDonald's, United Technologies and Accenture, are ready to be part of *Skills for America's Future* and expand their efforts.

On Tuesday, Dr. Jill Biden will host the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges, which will highlight the critical role that community colleges play in developing America's workforce and reaching our educational goals. On that day, leaders of *Skills for America's Future* will lead a breakout session with industry leaders, community college representatives, organized labor and workforce training experts to highlight best practices and key factors of such robust, successful partnerships.

### **Background**

In an increasingly competitive global economy, America's economic growth and competitiveness depends upon the education and skills of its workers. As part of his American Graduation Initiative, President Obama has called for an additional 5 million community college degrees and certificates by 2020, and to develop new steps to ensure that those credentials will help graduates get ahead in their careers.

The President's leadership has already made a difference. Under the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, over \$2 billion in competitive funds will be made available to community colleges over the next four years. The initiative, housed at the Department of Labor and implemented in close cooperation with the Department of Education, will build career pathways with businesses, advance the teaching of basic skills, establish education partnerships with other institutions, and support new online, open-source courses so that community colleges across the country can offer more classes without building more classrooms.

As part of this effort, the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board conducted outreach to private sector employers, labor leaders, philanthropy organizations, and policy leaders within the Administration to solicit views on workforce development challenges, publicly-financed programs, and more effective public/private partnerships. Employers identified public/private partnerships as one of the most effective ways to improve the skills and credentials of American workers and students. At the conclusion of those meetings, it was clear that private sector employers are eager to work on a national action plan that would make American workers more competitive and meet employers' needs for skilled workers. In response, the PERAB recommended the establishment of *Skills for America's Future* to harness this interest and energy.

#### **New Partners in Skills for America's Future**

PG&E's New Push on Energy Jobs: PG&E will commit over the next three years to expanding its energy job training program, with emphasis in four areas: clean tech vehicles, energy efficiency and renewables, smart grid, and skilled crafts. The strategy will include assistance to community colleges on curriculum design, faculty "train-the-trainer" programs, technical assistance, guest speakers, student field visits, in-kind equipment donations, program funding, employment, and enlistment of additional employers to advise and hire.

McDonald's to Expand its Professional Literacy Program: McDonald's will double its accelerated professional literacy program over the next 18 months, reaching an additional 1,000 McDonald's managers in 30 sites across the country. The program, which includes a series of four courses (210 curriculum hours) has won numerous awards, and leverages "virtual classroom" technology that allows rapid scale-up. In addition to expanding the program, McDonald's also will make its "virtual classroom" model available to community colleges.

United Technologies to Share Best Practices: United Technologies will collaborate with other employers to replicate its employee scholar and apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing, which have resulted in over 30,000 degrees earned over past 15 years.

Accenture to Help Employers Structure and Scale Pathways Programs: Accenture will work with other employers and community colleges to expand reach of its pathways programs, which prepare students with skills for their first job across industries. The company is also working with community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, education advocates and community-based organizations to promote the use of Business Roundtable's web-based, interactive "JobSTART101" course, which teaches essential professional skills that students need when they enter the workforce.

Gap Inc. to Launch Job Training Pilot Program in Seven Cities: Gap Inc. will expand its community college partnerships by launching a new program with community colleges in seven cities. The

effort will include in-store job shadowing, interview and leadership training, and scholarships. Gap expects to hire 1,200 students from community colleges in 2011, representing 5 percent of its annual hiring. Gap Inc. is committed to making its in-house curriculum and training materials available to community college students nationwide.