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CREDENTIALS CONTINUE TO PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICA'S WORKFORCE

WASHINGTON, DC – As job openings across the nation call for employees to upgrade skill sets, professional credentials play a significant role in helping employers find the right people to fill those opportunities, while helping employees become established and advance in their careers.

In recognition of the growing need for highly skilled employees, President Obama recently announced an expansion of the [Skills for America's Future](#) program. This initiative partners community colleges with industries to ensure that the nation's workforce has the necessary skills and training to fill existing and future jobs in the manufacturing sector. For job seekers, securing recognized credentials that acknowledge their abilities can be critical to obtaining employment and advancing within their careers.

"Certification matters. Professional credentials provide employers and employees with recognition for the time and training undertaken to develop expertise within a specific field," said Melissa Murer Corrigan, President of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). "Certification may positively impact company profitability and provide employees with nationally portable credentials that set them apart when seeking a new job or advancing within their current organization."

The White House's recent focus on building employee skills is timely, especially for the nation's manufacturing workforce. The sector has seen significant growth over the last two years, with more than [230,000 jobs created](#) since the beginning of 2010. An [aging manufacturing workforce](#) is also driving the sense of urgency behind this effort. Many current employees are likely to retire within the next 10 years. Without training and credentialing programs to prepare younger workers and acknowledge their abilities, the manufacturing sector will struggle to fill job openings with properly-skilled employees.

To help establish a credentialing system that is valued by employers, The Manufacturing Institute – the education and research affiliate of the [National Association of Manufacturers](#) (NAM) – recently partnered with a number of manufacturing firms and associations to create the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System. This program offers competency-based, customized education that leads to stackable, industry-recognized manufacturing credentials valued by a wide range of manufacturing employers throughout the nation. The broad reach of the Manufacturing Skills Certification System allows students and workers to access education through community colleges in 31 states.

"A skilled workforce is critical to our nation's economic recovery," said Emily Stover DeRocco, President of The Manufacturing Institute. "We are working with community colleges across the country to establish educational pathways that integrate the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System into for-credit programs of study to provide the skills needed most by local manufacturers. As employers recognize the value of the Manufacturing Skills Certification

System, they can hire certified candidates with confidence while maintaining the quality of their products and the pace of their operations."

Credentials obtained through [ICE Member organizations](#), or through programs such as the [Manufacturing Skills Certification System](#), offer value for any individuals seeking to enter into or advance within a meaningful career in their industry of choice.

About the Institute for Credentialing Excellence and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies

Established in 1977, ICE (formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance) is the leading international membership organization representing the credentialing community. ICE fulfills its mission through the delivery of education and training programs, in setting quality standards for credentialing, and by providing accreditation services through its accreditation division, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The ICE membership is composed of credentialing organizations, testing companies, and individual professional development consultants. ICE and NCCA are based in Washington, DC . For further information, please visit www.credentialingexcellence.org .

About The Manufacturing Institute

The Manufacturing Institute is the non-profit, non-partisan affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. It is part think-tank, part solutions center. The NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System is the flagship education initiative of the manufacturing sector, integrating nationally portable, industry-recognized credentials into high school, community college, and university programs of study. The NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System is comprised of nationally portable, industry-wide career-readiness and technical certifications from ACT, the American Welding Society (AWS), the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC), the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS), and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME).