



News Alert

1-12-MI
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
JACEY WILKINS
(202) 637-3493 (w)
(610) 637-2796 (c)
jwilkins@nam.org

Joyce Foundation Teams with Manufacturing Institute to Educate Employers About Industry-Based Certifications That Verify Worker Skills

Initiative will help match employer HR practices to education movement of using industry certifications to develop a technically skilled manufacturing workforce

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 26, 2012 –The Manufacturing Institute has received a \$200,000 grant from the Joyce Foundation to enhance the use of industry-based credentials in manufacturers’ human resources practices. The funds will help to educate employers about the benefits of using certifications to verify the skills of new hires and advance those of current employees. The work will focus on creating new employer-engagement and demand strategies in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and Wisconsin that can be replicated nationwide to support the competitiveness and growth of manufacturing in the United States.

The Institute designed and deployed the Manufacturing Skills Certification System, which integrates standards and content included in a system of nationally portable, industry-recognized credentials into high school and community college courses, to equip workers with the right skills to access and progress in advanced manufacturing careers. High schools, community colleges and 4-year colleges in 36 states are integrating these manufacturing education pathways into their programs of study, giving students and workers industry certifications with immediate value in the manufacturing workplace.

“As we build a supply of educated individuals with verifiable skills for jobs in the manufacturing economy, we also are focusing on educating employers about how to build relationships with education institutions and incorporate industry-based certifications in their hiring and talent management practices,” said Emily DeRocco, president, The Manufacturing Institute. “The reality is that the workforce—the people moving great designs and ideas to product—is the single most important driver of innovation. But, even in these tough economic times, manufacturers collectively report they have as many as 600,000 unfilled high-quality jobs because of a skills shortage in the hiring pool. Our vision is to close the skills gap to support our manufacturing economy, and educate employers on using certifications to attract, retain, and advance a talented workforce.”

As part of this work, the Institute will focus on the following activities to enhance understanding of and demand for certifications among U.S. manufacturers:

- Benchmark each state’s current employer engagement strategies to identify opportunities for partnership and enhancement.
- Develop for widespread distribution additional materials needed to present the business case for employers’ use of industry-recognized credentials in HR recruitment, screening and hiring practices.
- Analyze and select appropriate strategies for employer education and engagement, including sector or cluster-specific and peer-to-peer learning activities.
- Develop a full communications plan to encourage employers to take action within their companies and with their community colleges to support educational pathway development aligned to industry credentials.
- Participate in employer gatherings hosted by state manufacturing organizations and other business groups to educate and engage more employers.
- In partnership with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), explore linking companies’ tuition assistance to programs of study offering industry credentials.
- Continue to conduct research and gather evidence of the Return on Value of the Manufacturing Skills Certification System.

About the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System-

The NAM-Endorsed Skills Certification System is a system of stackable secondary and post-secondary credentials applicable to all sectors in the manufacturing industry. These nationally portable, industry-recognized credentials validate the skills and competencies needed to be productive and successful in any manufacturing environment. The credentialing partners that comprise the Skills Certification System are ACT, the American Welding Society, the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, the National Institute of Metalworking Skills, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, International Society of Automation, the Packaging Machinery Manufacturing Institute, the International Fluid Power Society, the National Center for Construction Education and Research, the American Society for Quality, the Fabricators and Manufacturers Association, the Association for Operations Management, the American Society of Transportation and Logistics, and the North American Die Casting Association.

The Skills Certification System is the benchmark standardized assessment of the critical workplace traits and occupational skills an individual needs to be successful in any entry-level manufacturing position. It confirms both technical and non-technical skills, assuring that an individual has both the “book smarts” and the “street smarts” to function in a high-paced manufacturing environment. Because the certifications are integrated into degree programs of study, individuals receive college credit while earning a certification, moving them closer to a

college degree. For more information about the NAM-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System, visit:

www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Education-Workforce/Skills-Certification-System/Skills-Certification-System.aspx

The Manufacturing Institute

The Manufacturing Institute (the Institute) is the 501 (c) 3 affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. As a non-partisan organization, the Institute is committed to delivering leading-edge information and services to the nation's manufacturers. The Institute focuses on developing human capital strategies through education reform and workforce development, conducting applied research to provide critical information to public policy makers on challenges and opportunities for today's industry, and advancing the innovation capacity of manufacturers operating in a global market. Visit www.themanufacturinginstitute.org.

The Joyce Foundation

Improving the Quality of Life in the Great Lakes region and Across the Country.

Joycefdn.org

The Joyce Foundation supports the development of policies that both improve the quality of life for people in the Great Lakes region and serve as models for the rest of the country. We focus on today's most pressing problems while also informing the public policy decisions critical to creating opportunity and achieving long-term solutions. The work is based on sound research and is focused on where we can add the most value. We encourage innovative and collaborative approaches with a regional focus and the potential for a national reach.