



Workforce Readiness

Too many young people today — the workforce of tomorrow — are not prepared to succeed in a knowledge-based economy. At a time when the front line of the vast baby boom generation is approaching retirement, businesses will require an exceptional pool of new workers to continue the American traditions of innovation and productivity.

Workforce readiness is an active and growing body of work for **Corporate Voices for Working Families** — now encompassing initiatives that include early childhood education, afterschool programming, older youth, alternative pathways for youth, and training and development in the workplace. Our publications and toolkits focusing on workforce readiness include:

■ Research

▶ ***The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce (2009):***

Corporate Voices, along with The Conference Board, the American Society for Training and Development, and the Society for Human Resource Management, raises the question of whether compensating for poorly prepared new workforce entrants with on-the-job workforce readiness training is the most effective way to address the readiness gap of entry-level employees. The survey of 217 employers found that half the companies provide readiness or remedial training, but most are not satisfied with the results.

▶ ***New Ways to Build a Quality Workforce:***

An Employer's Guide (2008): Businesses can and should play a role in ensuring that young people have opportunities to learn and grow on the job, but they also must be engaged in developing talent before they enter the job market. This guide was designed to inspire creative thinking, provide an alternative model for talent development, provide resource materials and encourage long-term investment.

▶ ***Tomorrow's Workforce: Ready or Not — It's a Choice the Business Community Must Make Now (2008):***

Businesses throughout the United States are facing a crisis. This statement of principles spotlights the challenges facing the business community and highlights actions that can be taken now to help solve a problem that involves everyone — not just our young people.

▶ ***Business Leadership: Supporting Youth Development and the Talent Pipeline (2007):***

Corporate Voices is committed to

identifying and promoting the corporate and public policies necessary to ensure that all young people have the opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in college, work and life. This promising practices report represents some of the most innovative strategies being used by companies to support the positive development of young people.

▶ ***Are They Really Ready To Work? (2006):***

Given companies' urgent need to find skilled professionals, Corporate Voices, The Conference Board, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Society for Human Resource Management surveyed more than 400 employers to better understand the readiness of new entrants to the workforce. The report's findings reflect employers' frustrations over the lack of preparedness of new entrants. Employers expect young people to arrive with a core set of basic knowledge and the ability to apply their skills in the workplace, and reality is not matching their expectations.

▶ ***Corporate Investments in Afterschool (2006):***

As the issue of afterschool continues to grow in importance, this report is meant to encourage a dialogue about corporate expenditures and engagement in afterschool and provide a valuable roadmap for increasing interest and effectiveness of corporate investment. The report summarizes interviews with eight companies and four advocacy organizations.

▶ ***Why Business Cares about Afterschool (2006):***

Not only do businesses have to worry about current employees' productivity, satisfaction and skills, but they also have to worry about the development of the

workforce of tomorrow. When current employees are absent because of child care issues and new employees need remedial training because of inadequate education, businesses lose money. Afterschool programs can address both of these problems by increasing academic success, keeping kids safe and helping working families. This report makes the business case for why the business community should invest in afterschool programs.

■ Policy Recommendations

- ▶ **Early Childhood Education Principles (2009):** Corporate Voices and Business Roundtable still believe, six years after the original early childhood education principles were released, that federal and state education efforts for children ages 0 to 5 should be based on a set of guiding principles. These revised principles draw on current early childhood research, lessons from K–12 education reform efforts and applicable lessons from the nation’s experience in building a voluntary system of higher education.
- ▶ **Strengthening America’s Competitiveness: Public Policy Recommendations for Workforce Readiness (2008):** Not only are far fewer young people entering the workforce to fill the gap left as baby boomers retire, but also millions of them are ill prepared for the rigors of higher education or quality work. Corporate Voices provides public policy recommendations that urge administration officials and lawmakers to carefully re-examine the nation’s policies and spending priorities with regard to improving education outcomes and workforce readiness levels for all young people.
- ▶ **Workforce Readiness Principles (2008):** These principles are designed as a guide to create a new system for preparing young people to make successful transitions to work in the 21st century. Business leaders can use these principles individually and collaboratively as they move forward in maximizing and harnessing the talents of the next generation.

■ Case Studies

Companies are investing time, effort and resources in developing quality programs that incorporate education programming and youth development with the needs of the communities in which they operate. These

case studies offer several examples of highly successful partnerships:

- ▶ Accenture
- ▶ Bank of America and Year Up
- ▶ Citizen Schools
- ▶ GlaxoSmithKline
- ▶ H-E-B
- ▶ North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs
- ▶ Time Warner

■ Toolkits

- ▶ **Business to Community Afterschool Toolkit (2006):** This toolkit was designed to serve as a resource to direct and inspire proactive business engagement in afterschool policies and programs at the community level and could lead to policies and community outreach that garner widespread public support.
- ▶ **Community to Business Afterschool Toolkit (2006):** This toolkit was designed to serve as a resource to help afterschool advocates, be they local providers or statewide networks, navigate the business world and form lasting partnerships that will benefit the business community, the afterschool programs, the parents and, most important, the youth who participate in these programs.
- ▶ **Business to Business Afterschool Toolkit (2006):** This toolkit was designed to serve as a resource to direct and inspire business engagement in afterschool programs and policies.

■ About Corporate Voices for Working Families

Corporate Voices for Working Families is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization formed in 2001, we improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders.

1020 19th Street, NW
Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-467-8130
Fax: 202-467-8140

Blog: corporatevoices.wordpress.com
Twitter: @corporatevoices

www.corporatevoices.org