

IT'S TIME TO EXPAND AND UPSKILL THE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE

One of the most difficult challenges facing today's electronics industry is a chronic shortage of adequately skilled workers. More than two-thirds of IPC's U.S. members report that an inability to find and retain skilled workers is limiting their growth and competitiveness. Part of this challenge is due to the rapid rate at which technology evolves.

IPC is taking significant strides to address this challenge through its workforce development programs, a suite of online, job-based training courses that are designed, built, and tested in conjunction with the electronics industry. In 2020, IPC awarded 50,000 worker certifications in the United States.

In addition, the industry has expanded its recruitment to traditionally under-employed communities, offering careers with strong earning and learning potential. Our workforce is diverse: many electronic manufacturing facilities boast a higher percentage of women workers than men; and immigrant communities are disproportionately represented.

The pressure is on our industry to tap the institutional and technical knowledge of the aging workforce to train the next generation of workers, even as the younger workers also learn the skills required for the factories of the future.

IPC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Support Industry-Recognized Credentials.** To align job training with job growth and to spur broader uptake of industry-recognized credentials, we urge the U.S. Government to encourage this type of training through:
 1. Business tax credits for expenditures on training and certification offered by industry associations.
 2. Tax incentives for training and certification at the individual level, focused on post-secondary education expenditures.
 3. Grants for industry-based organizations to help cover costs of industry training program development and upskilling workers who may be displaced due to automation.
 4. Partnering with trade associations to identify critical training and certification programs in key industries and ensure that federal contracting requirements contain language supporting these programs.
 5. Federal funding for trade associations to develop "next-gen" or "future-facing" training programs to keep U.S. industries competitive.
- **Reduce Burden for Apprenticeship Program Implementation.** IPC agrees with workforce experts that well-crafted apprenticeship programs offer individuals, especially those not planning to pursue higher education, an effective means of gaining the skills and mentoring necessary to thrive in certain fields, including electronics. However, the U.S. has failed to cultivate an environment in

which apprenticeship programs flourish, save for a few industries. The current structure of the existing apprenticeship program in the U.S. is onerous for employers, which is likely the reason that apprenticeships have not caught on as they have in European countries.

IPC believes that the private sector is best suited to identify the occupational skills that workers need to succeed, and we encourage the U.S. Department of Labor (DoL) to work with industry to find less burdensome ways for industry to implement apprenticeship programs. H.R. 447, the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021, passed by the U.S. House, is a step in the right direction but could use refinement.

CULTIVATING STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING

Meanwhile, our [IPC Education Foundation \(IPCEF\)](#) is taking action to introduce students to the electronics manufacturing industry. IPCEF and its members around the country are partnering with primary and secondary schools to help students develop their skills, knowledge, and technical capabilities. IPCEF has also established over 30 student chapters at universities and community colleges to serve as bridges between local IPC member companies and students.

IPC's ROLE

IPC appreciates the bipartisan support that exists for investing in education and training, particularly as it relates to cultivating skilled workers for clean, interesting, high-paying jobs in electronics manufacturing.

On behalf of electronics manufacturers, we are willing and able partners in building an updated U.S. education and training strategy.

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For More Information:

Chris Mitchell
Vice President, Global Government Relations
ChrisMitchell@IPC.org
Tel: + 1-202-661-8097

Ken Schramko
Senior Director, North American Government Relations
KenSchramko@IPC.org
Tel: +1 202-661-8094