Mission  The Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW) promotes high educational standards and effective workforce training systems so that they are aligned with each other and with today’s rigorous business demands.

ICW is a non-profit, non-partisan, 501(c)3 affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, promoting the rigorous educational standards and effective job training systems needed to preserve the strength of America’s greatest economic resource, its workforce.

Through its events, publications, and policy initiatives—and drawing upon the Chamber’s extensive network of corporate members—ICW connects the best minds in American business with the most innovative thinkers in American education, helping them work together to ensure the nation’s continued prosperity.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation, representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

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Introduction

Bringing the expertise of American industry to the service of American education

America’s business and industry leaders must have the resources they need to compete successfully in the 21st century global marketplace. That’s why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce works tirelessly to promote improvements in every part of the nation’s economic infrastructure, from transportation, energy, and technology to health care, immigration, and tax policy.

However, while the Chamber remains dedicated to bringing about a whole range of economic reforms, it recognizes that one part of the competitiveness agenda requires special attention—America must do more to educate its workforce.

In business today, no competition is tougher than the global race for talent. In every industry, every job sector, and every part of the world, employers are asking the same question: How are we going to find, train, and retain the best workers?

Ninety percent of the fastest-growing jobs in America require at least two years of postsecondary education. Over the next several years, the U.S. Department of Labor predicts there will be roughly four million new job openings in health care, education, and computer sciences alone. At the same time, nearly seventy eight million baby boomers are heading toward retirement. Yet, the nation’s young people remain unprepared either to replace those workers or to fill new positions in high-growth areas—today, a third of all students do not finish high school. Up to half of those who do graduate lack the advanced literacy and math skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.

Further, given the quickening pace of change in workplace technology and the growing demand for flexible, highly-skilled employees in all sectors of the economy, not even the most experienced workers can afford to rely on existing skills. To remain competitive, businesses must invest not just in the preparation and recruitment of new talent, but also the continuing development of workers at all stages of their careers.

Unless America makes dramatic improvements in education and workforce training, it will pay a terrible price, risking its place as an economic superpower and its identity as a striving, middle-class democracy.
Compelled to respond to these urgent challenges, in 2006 the Chamber created the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW), a 501(c)3 affiliate dedicated to strengthening the nation’s educational standards and the quality of its workforce.

Just one year after its founding, the Institute has already come into its own, becoming a major force in national discussions about education reform, workforce needs, and business-education partnerships. Truly, 2007 was a year of phenomenal growth and tremendous successes, leaving ICW well-positioned to expand its influence even further in the years to come, bringing the expertise of American industry to the service of American education.

We at ICW wish to thank you for your past support. As we continue the mission of promoting rigorous educational standards and effective workforce training systems, we hope that you will continue to support ICW’s efforts, helping to ensure that the nation’s workforce once again becomes the envy of the world.

To remain competitive, businesses must invest not just in the preparation and recruitment of new talent, but also the continuing development of workers at all stages of their careers.
ICW’s mission is to promote high educational standards and effective workforce training systems so that they are aligned with each other and with today’s rigorous business demands. ICW provides a diverse array of programs, services, and resources to realize these objectives and to provide the education, training, and business communities with the tools they need to continue to make America’s workforce the most well-educated and highly skilled in the world. These activities include:

- The annual Education and Workforce Summit
- Coalition and capacity building
- Community strategic engagement
- Regional forums
- Research and reporting
- Technical assistance
- Monthly conference calls

The following pages highlight several key programs and initiatives from the past year and previews additional programmatic areas that ICW will focus on in 2008.

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness

During its first five years, the federal No Child Left Behind Act has generated a wealth of detailed information on the academic performance of America’s students, demonstrating the urgent need to reform the nation’s schools and improve the preparation of its workforce. Yet, while the national picture has come into clearer focus, state-level information on student performance remains somewhat elusive.

Easily accessible on the website, Leaders and Laggards offers clear and accurate information on the varied progress that states have made across nine broad areas, including academic achievement, return on investment, truth in advertising about student proficiency, rigor of standards, and data quality. And while it demonstrates improvement in some areas, it also shows that no single state comes close to educating a majority of its students to proficient levels in reading or math.

In producing this major report, ICW worked in partnership with the Center for American Progress, a research and educational institute led by former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta; and with Frederick M. Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Further, to guarantee the quality of the data and the accuracy of the analysis, ICW tapped the expertise of some of the nation’s leading educational researchers, including Dan Goldhaber, from the University of Washington, Richard Ingersoll, from the University of Pennsylvania, and Susanna Loeb, from Stanford University.

The response to Leaders and Laggards has been tremendous, proving just how hungry the public is for clear, reliable data on educational performance at the state level. By the end of 2007, roughly 7,000 hard copies of the report had been distributed, and the website had been visited more than 185,000 times.
Leaders and Laggards
Education Report Card
Academic Achievement

To see the full report, visit www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard.
A Joint Platform for Education Reform

In conjunction with the release of Leaders and Laggards, ICW again joined forces with the Center for American Progress to publish A Joint Platform for Education Reform, which advocates a set of specific, actionable, high-priority strategies for improving the nation’s schools.

The Joint Platform gives attention to a number of important initiatives, such as efforts to reform teacher pay and performance structures, to encourage schools to expand learning time, to improve the teaching of math and science, and to continue the important work of raising the quality and rigor of state education standards. The report gives special emphasis to four areas of reform, focusing on the core structural changes that follow most directly from the findings in Leaders and Laggards:

• Investing in better teaching
• Encouraging more innovation in teaching and school design
• Building better data systems
• Improving school and district management

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Center for American Progress are well positioned to champion efforts in these key areas. By focusing on a limited number of high-priority strategies, they are effective advocates for positive change in American education.

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings speaks at the U.S. Chamber to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act.
ICW’s Education Reform Road Show

ICW took *Leaders and Laggards* and *A Joint Platform for Education Reform* on the road in 2007, presenting the reports to key state officials and business leaders in Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Michigan, Alabama, Montana, and North Carolina.

Thanks to generous funding from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, ICW joined the Center for American Progress (CAP) in hosting a pair of symposia on the two reports, held in New York City and Chicago, with participation from influential public figures such as Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, New York City Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein, U.S. Chamber President and CEO Tom Donohue, and CAP President and CEO John Podesta.
Innovation America: A Public-Private Partnership

As the 2006-2007 Chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano made it her goal to promote innovation in American industry and education by supporting state and regional efforts to incubate creative new businesses, rewarding forward-looking industry leaders, and building new models in business-education partnerships.

Following her tenure, Governor Napolitano turned to ICW to ensure the business community was engaged in launching the Innovation America Foundation, a new initiative dedicated to continuing the efforts begun at the NGA.

To further support the campaign’s work, ICW brokered relationships with local chambers of commerce to host the Governor for a series of regional forums on education and the economy and published *Innovation America: A Public-Private Partnership*, which recommends ten ways in which state and local business leaders can cooperate in fostering greater innovation and developing a stronger workforce.
Established in 1997, WINs is a national, multi-year project that helps local chambers of commerce and other business intermediaries strengthen their workforce development systems, making them more responsive to the needs of both employers and workers. In 2007, the project continued to offer a wide range of services and resources, including technical assistance, Web-based seminars, and meetings on topics such as Building Regional Alliances for Workforce Development and Connecting to Community Colleges. Further, it produced and disseminated a WINs guidebook and four how-to manuals, sharing the success of those organizations that developed innovative pilot programs in workforce development.

Originally financed by the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles Stuart Mott Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Labor, WINs is a joint initiative of ICW, Jobs for the Future, and the National Association of Manufacturers, in partnership with the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce and local chambers in Arlington, Texas; Brooklyn, New York; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 2007, ICW Board Chairman Wes Jurey testified on behalf of the U.S. Chamber on workforce legislation before the U.S. House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.
Frontline and Hourly Wage Workforce: Keys to Recruitment and Retention

Across the country, businesses are struggling to recruit and retain dependable hourly-wage workers. However, if they take positive steps to ease the challenges faced by low-income working families, they can improve recruitment, reduce turnover rates, maintain a well-qualified workforce, strengthen their capacity to compete, and ultimately contribute to the successful economic development of their communities.

Funded by the Ford Foundation, ICW’s Frontline and Hourly Wage Workforce initiative helps businesses design strategies to recruit and retain qualified employees, with an emphasis on building the job skills of frontline and hourly-wage workers. In addition to hosting successful community forums in Kansas City, Missouri; Detroit, Michigan; El Paso, Texas; and Savannah, Georgia, the initiative’s 2007 accomplishments include the publication of Recruitment and Retention of the Frontline and Hourly Wage Worker: A Business Perspective, which recommends a range of tangible steps—beyond raising salaries—that employers can take to support entry-level workers, build their commitment and loyalty, and help them become valuable, long-term employees.
ICW held the Chamber’s fourth annual *Education and Workforce Summit* in Washington, D.C., September 24-26, 2007. More than 350 business leaders, workforce and education professionals, and education policymakers attended the Summit.

The annual Summit is part of a national effort to promote effective and sustainable business and education partnerships. This year’s theme was Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the States.

The event began with Ben Bernanke, Federal Reserve Board Chairman, delivering powerful remarks on education and the economy.

Additional speakers included:
- Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen
- Anne Bryant, President, National Association of School Boards
- Susan Fuhrman, President of Teachers College, Columbia University
- Kati Haycock, President, Education Trust
- Martha Lamkin, President, Lumina Foundation for Education
- Pekka Lintu, Ambassador of Finland
- Frank Luntz, Chairman and CEO of Luntz, Maslansky Strategic Research
- Paul Pastorek, Louisiana State Superintendent of Education
- Mike Schmidt, Director, Ford Motor Company Fund
The 50+ Workforce Initiative

By 2010, nearly one in three workers in the United States will be over the age of 50. As the relative proportion of younger workers declines, attracting and retaining experienced and reliable workers must become a core business strategy for all employers.

In partnership with AARP, and with the participation of local chambers and trade associations, ICW has been working to help small- and medium-sized businesses address the growing impact that aging baby boomers are having on the workforce. Drawing upon earlier project studies and publications—including the 50+ Workforce Survey and the 50+ Workforce Matrix, both released in 2006—ICW offers recommendations and technical assistance for employers committed to building workplaces that successfully engage and utilize the skills of workers over the age of 50.
Workplace Flexibility

Employers struggling to meet a growing demand for skilled workers should consider innovative strategies such as job-sharing, flexible scheduling, and online commuting. Workplace flexibility can be a powerful tool in recruiting, retaining, and developing qualified employees, while simultaneously helping businesses to become more competitive.

In partnership with the Families and Work Institute and the Twiga Foundation, and with generous support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, ICW has contributed to a nationwide campaign since 2004 to demonstrate that businesses stand to benefit from the creation of workplace flexibility policies.

In December 2007, ICW published the report *Workplace Flexibility: Employers Respond to the Changing Workforce*, which makes a strong business case for flexibility policies, describes a number of innovative programs, and offers a set of useful recommendations for business leaders eager to find and retain talented workers.
Digital Skills Working Group

In July 2007, ICW launched a new working group bringing together a number of prominent business leaders from a variety of industries, to highlight the importance of digital skills in the U.S. workforce. The Working Group aims to:

- Articulate a clear consensus on the digital skills employees will need in the coming year
- Create and endorse digital skills standards based upon the extensive research that already exists
- Increase attention to the issue, and create common messages for the business community to deliver
- Connect to other national initiatives addressing digital skills training infrastructure, access, and capacity

Members and advisors include: AARP Foundation, American Association of Community Colleges, CompTIA, CVS Caremark, ETS, GlaxoSmithKline, Intel, Manpower, and Microsoft; additional members will join in 2008.

Workforce Housing: Chambers and Realtors Building Retention Solutions for Business

In many parts of the country, rising housing costs have made it difficult for workers—particularly entry-level and moderate-wage workers—to rent or purchase a home near their place of employment. As a result, businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain skilled employees. Unable to fill important jobs, some have even been forced to relocate their offices, leaving behind the cities and towns where they once thrived.

To address this growing crisis, ICW has teamed with the National Association of Realtors®, a natural ally in the effort to help frontline and first responders find affordable housing within commuting distance of available jobs. Since 2005, the Workforce Housing initiative has offered technical assistance to local business leaders, trade associations, chambers of commerce, and realtors who want to take the lead in promoting housing developments, land-use policies, lending programs, transportation services, and other resources that help employees and employers remain in their communities. Further, the initiative has gathered and published case studies to show how chambers, realtors, and communities are addressing workforce housing shortages, providing a number of models of effective practice.
Community Building through the Earned Income Tax Credit

Every year, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) helps upwards of five million Americans—including roughly three million children—stay out of poverty. Yet, large numbers of eligible workers miss out on this valuable tax benefit, simply because they are unaware that it exists.

ICW worked to help chamber leaders, workforce professionals, and community advocates raise awareness of and participation in the EITC. With generous support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ICW published Community Building through the Earned Income Tax Credit, offering a range of practical tips and suggestions. Further, ICW joined with the Internal Revenue Service and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce to offer a leadership development course titled “Community Building through the Earned Income Tax Credit,” held in Trenton, New Jersey, in March 2007.

The agenda featured experts from the Brookings Institution and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, with presentations focusing on ways in which the EITC can be leveraged to help businesses retain their workers and assist their communities.
HR Assistance for Hiring Individuals with Disabilities

Among the more than fifty million Americans who experience some degree of physical or mental disability, most are willing and able to succeed in the workforce. However, many never get the opportunity to put their skills to use—roughly eight million are unemployed, representing an enormous labor pool waiting to be discovered by the nation’s employers.

Through a partnership with TransCen, Inc., ICW is helping businesses learn about and take advantage of an existing network of Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, housed at ten locations around the country. These Centers offer information, referrals, and training on all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing free or low-cost assistance to employers seeking to tap into this valuable segment of the workforce.
ICW Partner Profiles

Chancellor Joel I. Klein, New York City Department of Education, addresses CEOs at ICW’s Education Reform Road Show in New York on October 24, 2007.

PHOTO: IAN WAGREICH

JPMorgan Chase Foundation

As an industry leader, JPMorgan Chase recognizes that successful decision making in any business—including the business of education—depends upon reliable data, such as the detailed, state-level school performance data included in ICW’s Leaders and Laggards report.

In order to help industry leaders take full advantage of this important new resource, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation provided support for a series of high-level forums to highlight and discuss the report. Held in New York and Chicago in 2007 and Los Angeles and Houston in early 2008, these Leaders and Laggards “Road Shows” give regional CEOs a much-needed introduction to existing sources of information on student achievement, showing them how the available data can inform their efforts to improve education in their towns, cities, and states.

“Given its location within the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ICW has access to a national network of businesses, chambers of commerce, and trade associations. It’s incredibly well-positioned to leverage existing partnerships between business and education,” says Mark Rigdon, JPMorgan Chase’s Vice President and Global Director of Education Grantmaking. “But all the connections in the world are useless without solid, dependable information. That’s why we’re delighted to know that ICW places such importance on data-driven decision making, and that’s why we’re happy to promote reports such as Leaders and Laggards.”
From Left: Lew Ebert (NC Chamber of Commerce), Tricia Willoughby (NC Business Committee for Education), Mary Linda Andrews (GlaxoSmithKline), Former NC Governor James B. Hunt Jr., Susan Milliken (Futures for Kids), Kathy Hoffmeier (Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce), Carl Harris (Durham Public Schools), Minnie Forte-Brown (Durham Public Schools), and Bill Shore (GlaxoSmithKline), receive ICW’s first ever Community Competitiveness award.

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce

In Durham, North Carolina, where business is booming and smart, tech-savvy employees are in high demand, the local chamber of commerce has been working for more than two decades to build strong relationships among the area’s educators and business leaders.

The chamber regularly sponsors a wide range of business–education partnerships and programs. For example, it recently joined with the Durham Public Schools to offer a series of meetings designed to educate teachers and guidance counselors about the region’s industries and workforce needs. Likewise, the chamber offers annual forums to help local businesses set up job shadowing and mentoring programs for high school and college students. It also administers several youth programs of its own. Another new initiative reaches out to middle schoolers, inviting kids and their parents or guardians to an evening career expo, where nearly a hundred employers share information about career opportunities in and around Durham.

“We’re helping kids to see how the learning they do in the classroom connects to the good jobs that will be waiting for them once they finish their education,” says Kathy Hoffmeier, the chamber’s Vice President of Workforce Development. “We’re proud of our efforts to build good relationships between the schools and the surrounding business community. It’s good for kids, it’s good for business, and it’s good for the future of Durham County.”
ICW staff had an extremely busy 2007, traveling to more than fifty conferences, workshops, and meetings to promote its comprehensive agenda for change in K-12 education, postsecondary education, and workforce development:

**K-12 Education**

ICW’s *Leaders and Laggards* and *Joint Platform for Education Reform* reports generated tremendous interest across the country, leading to invitations to speak before a number of state legislatures and governors, state and local business associations, and elsewhere. For example, venues included:

- Oklahoma’s Joint Senate and House Committee on Education and Labor
- The Rhode Island Statewide Coalition
- Alabama Economic Developers
- Tennessee’s Business Roundtable

Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, Johnson City (TN) Chamber President Gary Mabrey, and U.S. Chamber Senior Vice President Arthur J. Rothkopf discuss K-12 education reform at ICW’s 2007 Education and Workforce Summit.
2007 ICW Outreach & Presentations

Postsecondary Education

In 2007, ICW renewed its partnerships with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and others involved in building stronger links between two-year colleges and the workforce. Outreach included:

- Presentations to the AACC Board of Directors
- A panel discussion at the Annual Summit of the League for Innovation in the Community College
- A presentation on business and higher education at the Annual Meeting of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce

Workforce Development

In 2007, ICW was repeatedly asked to provide recommendations on how best to support businesses in hiring, training, and retaining a highly skilled workforce. Highlights included:

- The U.S. Department of Labor invited ICW to host Business Leadership Day at its annual Workforce Innovations Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.
- ICW helped to shape the agenda at the winter meeting of the National Commission for the Advancement of Adult Literacy.
- ICW presented to three National Governors Association meetings on workforce development in Minnesota, Colorado, and Maryland.
- ICW presented and provided technical assistance to 23 states involved in the Workplace Flexibility initiative.
- ICW presented its Blueprint for the 50+ Workforce to the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry’s Annual Human Resources Conference.
2007 Board Participation

ICW lent its expertise to a number of advisory boards in 2007, including:

• AARP’s Alliance for a Mature Workforce
• American Association of Community College’s Advisory Committee for the Plus 50 Initiative
• American Youth Policy Forum Board of Directors
• America’s Promise Trustees Council
• The Center on Aging and Work/Workplace Flexibility at Boston College’s Research and Advisory Committee
• Community Partnerships for Adult Learning Business Advisory Group
• Data Quality Campaign Endorsing Partners Working Group
• National Information and Communication Technology Literacy Policy Council
• The National Institute for Literacy’s Expert Working Group on Workforce Basic Skills Development
• National Teachers Hall of Fame
• State Scholars Initiative Advisory Board
ICW’s 2007 Awards

ICW honored former Dollar General CEO David Perdue with the 2007 Excellence in Leadership award for his commitment to improve adult literacy. This award honors a private or public sector leader who has demonstrated a commitment to creating positive, systemic change in education.

ICW awarded the city of Durham, North Carolina, with ICW’s first-ever Community Competitiveness award, which recognizes a community’s progress in education reform and workforce development. To be considered for this annual award, communities should be able to demonstrate strong evidence of engagement in initiatives that:

- Enhance the community in which employees learn, work, and live
- Build relationships with multiple stakeholders
- Take a proactive role in regional education, workforce, and economic development issues

ICW Newsletter

To receive information about current workforce development and education initiatives, promising practices, and the latest trends and research, sign up for ICW’s free on-line Workforce and Education Newsletter at www.uschamber.com/icw.
2007 Partners and Advisors

The Institute for a Competitive Workforce wishes to thank the many sponsors and partner organizations that made 2007 such a productive year, including:

- AARP
- Achieve, Inc.
- Alliance for Excellent Education
- American Association of Community Colleges
- Association for Career and Technical Education
- Association of Corporate Contributions Professionals
- Center on Aging & Work/Workplace Flexibility at Boston College
- Center for American Progress
- Data Quality Campaign
- Embassy of Finland
- Ernst & Young
- Families and Work Institute
- Internal Revenue Service
- Jobs for the Future
- Microsoft Partners in Learning
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- National Association of Manufacturers Center for Workforce Success
- National Center for Educational Accountability/Just for the Kids
- National Governors Association
- Partnership for New York City
- Public Impact
- Renaissance Schools Fund
- Rick Hess, director of education policy studies, American Enterprise Institute
- Skills2Compete
- Society for Human Resource Management
- Strong American Schools
- Twiga Foundation
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- University of Missouri
Looking Ahead: 2008 and Beyond

For ICW, 2008 promises to be an even more productive and exciting year than 2007. The Institute will continue to promote K-12 standards setting and reform at the state level; work with the American Association of Community Colleges to facilitate better alignment among high school and community college curricula and workforce needs; help business and industry to find, train, and retain workers with 21st century skills; and help businesses to adopt to the changing demographics of the American workforce. ICW will also launch new projects in a number of additional areas.

Early Childhood Education Initiative

In 2008, ICW will plan and execute a nationwide Early Childhood Education initiative, intended both to drive the national debate about Pre-K policies and to provide business leaders with useful guidance on how they can support the growth of high-quality early childhood education programs in their cities, states, and regions.

Planned activities include:

• Establishing an Early Childhood Education Working Group for business leaders
• Issuing a white paper on Early Childhood Education and Pre-K programs and policies
• Identifying states interested in developing new Pre-K policies and programs
• Incorporating Early Childhood Education into the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for Organizational Management course
• Developing an Early Childhood Education module for ICW’s Leadership Development course
• Incorporating early childhood education into the agenda of the 2008 ICW Education and Workforce Summit, to be held October 20–22 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
ICW’s Business LEADs Network

As an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ICW is uniquely positioned to build a national network of business leaders, experts, elected officials, and other stakeholders dedicated to education and workforce development reforms.

ICW’s Labor and Education Advocates Development (LEADs) network for business will launch in 2008. ICW will develop a new course curriculum for business leaders who wish to better understand issues related to public education and workforce training, or implement strategies to improve their local schools and workforce development opportunities. ICW will offer courses during the year through regional training programs around the country and at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce building in Washington, D.C., featuring faculty members selected from leading government agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations.

Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century

ICW will work with national partners and industry associations to build awareness of successful practices and training opportunities in the field of career and technical education. Drawing upon lessons learned by the League for Innovation through its College and Career Transitions project, ICW will develop and disseminate key messages, identify partner states and governors, and promote cutting-edge approaches to equipping students and incumbent workers with the highly prized, real-world skills that are most in demand in today’s economy.
At the ICW Press:

To be published in spring and summer of 2008, two major new reports from ICW—to be available in hard copy and online.

*Corporations, Chambers, and Charters: How Business Can Support High Quality Public Charter Schools*

Since 1992, public charter schools have been providing education choices for parents and students, liberating teachers and administrators from red tape, allowing more innovation in the classroom, and most important, improving achievement for kids. In exchange for increased flexibility in operations, charter schools accept high accountability for results.

Fifteen years on, 40 states and the District of Columbia have charter school laws, with more than 4,000 schools serving over one million students. Many public charter schools have moved to the forefront in educational achievement, and many are producing astonishing results with traditionally underserved students, developing new practices with the potential to drive broader reform in public education.

But these successes don’t happen automatically. Chartering is hard work, and creating successful new schools requires an array of skills and resources not commonly found in the traditional public school sector.

With the generous support of the Doris & Donald Fisher Fund, ICW has commissioned this guide for business leaders on available opportunities to support high-quality charter schools, ensuring that this critical movement continues to flourish.
Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century: A White Paper

In order to succeed in the emerging knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy, workers require far better preparation than they needed even a few short years ago. Not only does the new workplace demand that all Americans develop a core set of “21st Century Skills”—including the ability to learn on one’s own, to gather and synthesize information, to work effectively in teams, to solve problems, to communicate through multiple means, and to manage time, money, and responsibilities—but the nation’s businesses also increasingly depend upon employees with specific, advanced technical skills, particularly in high-growth fields such as construction, electrical work, and industrial mechanics.

In this white paper, ICW will set forth a number of concrete policy recommendations meant to reinvigorate career and technical education programs across the country, both at the high school level and in community colleges and technical training institutes. Now more than ever, America’s prosperity depends upon workers who couple academic achievement with a mastery of real-world skills.
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ICW Executive Directors
Karen Elzey
Lydia Logan

Standing from left to right are Steve Wing, Kay Jacks, Jim Whaley, and Stan Harrell.
Seated from left to right are Barbara Haight, Wes Jurey, Arthur J. Rothkopf, and Bill Shore.
Supporters

The Institute for a Competitive Workforce gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the many groups and individuals that have helped make 2007 such a successful year. It is with their generosity that ICW is able to provide the tools and resources necessary to be a leading voice on education and workforce development. Thanks to all our supporters, we are truly positioned for an even greater 2008.

- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Booz Allen Hamilton
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- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
- Union Pacific Foundation

2007 Annual Report
ICW Revenue Sources

During the past three years, ICW has had several key sources of revenue, most of which were grants. However, last year marked the first time that corporate and foundation donations accounted for a majority of ICW’s revenue (see charts below). These results can be attributed to a shift in strategy from a business model concentrated on federal and non-federal grants to one focused on identifying support and resources from corporate and foundation donors—those that rely on and benefit from ICW’s policy initiatives, proactive outreach, and business network.

As an example, due to record registration, 2007’s Education and Workforce Summit was a much more significant source of revenue for the Institute than in previous years (10% of ICW’s 2007 revenue was generated by the Summit compared to just 2% in 2005).

This operating strategy has helped establish greater financial health for ICW as it continues to grow and expand its outreach efforts.
Get Involved

Institute for a Competitive Workforce

Who We Are

Serving as a primary bridge between the business and education communities, the Institute for a Competitive Workforce is working to ensure that businesses have access—today and tomorrow—to an educated and skilled workforce. Through policy initiatives, business outreach, and a strong grassroots network, ICW connects the best business minds with the most innovative education thought leaders to preserve the American workforce as this country’s greatest business asset and its strongest future resource.

How We Can Work Together

We hope that you will join us in identifying best practices and disseminating solutions to the education and workforce challenges facing America. To learn more about ICW’s key initiatives, issue specific conference calls, and the Community Competitiveness Award, which is presented at the ICW Annual Education and Workforce Summit, visit our website at www.uschamber.com/icw.

Share Your Experience

We want to hear from you. Each issue of the ICW newsletter, which reaches approximately 4,000 leaders in business, government, higher education, and nonprofit organizations, highlights a corporation and a chamber that has identified unique or creative solutions to workforce development and education issues. Let us know what you are doing and share your stories by calling us at 202-463-5525 or sending an e-mail to icw@uschamber.com.