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THE WHITE HOUSE

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VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE ANNOUNCES NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO OFFER WORKERS 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Washington, D. C. -- Vice President Al Gore today announced new efforts by a coalition of business, organized labor, education and government to help ensure that American workers have the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Members of the 21st Century Skills Leadership Group presented the Vice President with a report embracing a common vision and recommendations for expanding opportunities for adult learning, asking communities across the country to consider these recommendations, and detailing dozens of specific actions to support their vision.

"America's competitiveness and prosperity will depend increasingly upon high-skill, high-wage jobs," said Vice President Al Gore. "We must work together to help all of our people keep on learning throughout their lifetimes and get the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century." The 21st Century Skills Leadership Group, a group of leaders from business, organized labor, education, and all levels of government, was convened by the Vice President in January. The Vice President asked the group to develop a set of recommendations to their peers that will help ensure a prepared and thriving workforce in the next century.

The report presented today, *Skills For a New Century: A Blueprint for Lifelong Learning*, outlines the leadership group's vision, recommendations and initial commitments to help American businesses find more skilled workers and to help all adult Americans acquire the skills they need to succeed in a changing economy. The report outlines five broad recommendations to provide adults the skills they need and employers the skilled employees needed to remain competitive.

- Deliver education and training that is tied to high standards, leads to useful credentials and meets labor market needs.
- Improve access to financial resources for lifetime learning for all adult Americans, including those in low-wage jobs.
- Promote learning at a time, place, and manner that meets worker needs and interests, including through the use of learning technologies to enable learning at home, the workplace, or elsewhere.
- Encourage and motivate adults to pursue further education and training and inform them of resources available to help them do so.
- Form partnerships among a wide array of organizations and stakeholders to support workforce development and lifelong learning for adults.

Commitments from public and private organizations outlined in the report include:

- The American Council on Education (ACE), the AFL-CIO and the National Association of Manufacturers will expand AEC's "College is Possible" campaign
- targeted until now primarily at young people -- to include an additional focus on encouraging adults to get further education and training.
- The Lila-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, Harvard University, the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, and the National Coalition for Literacy will host a national literacy summit in February 2000 to create an action plan for improving basic literacy skills in order to help close the skills gap. This summit will also be supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, American Council on Education, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Cisco Systems, the Communications Workers of America, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, and Arizona State University will develop an on-line system to help retired military personnel and others assess and improve their information technology skills and prepare for the high-wage, high-skill jobs of the New Economy.
- The Communications Workers of America, GTE, the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education will launch a national effort to increase funding, community awareness, and business support for adult literacy programs. As part of this effort, 21 million GTE customers will be able to donate \$1 per month to support literacy in their community by checking a box on their monthly bill.
- Based on the leadership group's recommendation, the Vice President also announced a new initiative to assist local communities interested in developing and implementing community-wide strategies to help adults get the skills they need to succeed. This effort will

supportcommunity-based partnerships involving business, labor, education andgovernment that develop plans focused on clear, objective, measurablegoals for adult learning and skill development across a community.Members of this leadership group will serve on the advisory committee for this effort, encourage the active involvement of their peers, andwill ask communities to consider adopting recommendations outlined inthis report. The federal interagency working group supporting thiseffort will include the National Partnership for Reinventing Governmentand the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor and Commerce.

Related Resources

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