

# NIOSH Safe·Skilled·Ready Workforce Initiative

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# The Need

Need for a *skilled* and *healthy* workforce

- Growing concern about the skills gap in the U.S. economy
- Shortage of workers for middle skills jobs undermining U.S. competitiveness

# A Missing Life Skill

Hard / basic skills (the three Rs +)	Soft / life / applied skills
<p>Reading                      Writing                      Arithmetic                      Government/Economics                      Science                      Humanities/Arts                      Foreign Language                      History/Geography</p>	<p>Critical thinking/problem solving                      Oral and written communication                      Teamwork / collaboration                      Diversity                      IT application                      Leadership                      Creativity / innovation                      Lifelong learning /self direction                      Professionalism / work ethic                      Ethics / accountability/social responsibility                      Flexibility / adaptability                      Appropriate health &amp; wellness choices                      →Skills to contribute to a safe and healthy workplace?</p>

Sources: Conference Board; 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Framework

# Mission Statement

Before they join the U.S. workforce for the first time, or start a new job, all workers will have the basic skills they need to stay safe at work and to contribute to a safe, healthy, and productive workplace.

# Considers the Total Workforce

## The Initiative:

- Approaches the total, future workforce; Focuses on educating young and new workers
- Recognizes that employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace
- Promotes the idea that everyone should have basic skills to help protect them on the job now, and throughout their lives

# What's New

## The Safe·Skilled·Ready Workforce Initiative:

- Promotes workplace safety and health as a missing “life skill”
  - Complements existing work readiness skills frameworks and training programs
- Promotes generalizable, transferable workplace safety and health skills (eight core competencies)

# Core Competencies

1. Recognize that, while work has benefits, all workers can be injured, become sick, or even be killed on the job. Workers need to know how workplace risks can affect their lives and their families
2. Recognize that work-related injuries and illnesses are predictable and can be prevented

# Core Competencies (cont.)

3. Identify hazards at work and predict how workers can be injured or made sick
4. Recognize how to prevent injury and illness. Describe the best ways to address workplace hazards and apply these concepts to specific workplace problems
5. Identify emergencies at work and decide on the best ways to address them



## Core Competencies (cont.)

6. Recognize employer and worker rights and responsibilities that play a role in safe and healthy work
7. Find resources that help keep workers safe and healthy on the job
8. Demonstrate how workers can communicate with others—including people in authority roles—to ask questions or report problems or concerns when they feel unsafe or threatened

# The Role of NIOSH

- Many technical, vocational, apprenticeship, on-the-job, and other work-related training programs teach workplace safety and health skills
- NIOSH and partners can help integrate this missing life skill into all education and career pathways

# Safe, Skilled, and Ready



Basic workplace safety and health skills (the 8 core competencies) are the foundation for a lifetime of safe and healthy work.

# Three Main Pathways

1. Education
2. Business and Labor
3. Health

# Education Pathway

## NIOSH Young Worker Curriculum project

- Develop new curriculum, aligned with CDC's National Health Education Standards (NHES) and the Common Career Technical Core
  - Conduct demonstration projects in three states (CA, NY, OR)
  - Create an online assessment tool and certificate
- Explore ways to move up (to community colleges) and down (to elementary schools) with the competencies/curriculum

# What is *Talking Safety*?

Free NIOSH curriculum that teaches work readiness skills to middle and high school students:

- 11 flexible lessons, customized for each state
- 8 core competencies, that can be assessed and measured
- Games, group work, and role play that engages and motivates students
- Hands-on materials that highlight topics relevant to young people's daily lives



# YOUTH @ WORK

## Talking Safety

### A Safety & Health Curriculum for Young Workers

California Edition



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



# Business and Labor Pathway

- Develop recommendations to merge the initiative with current, work-readiness programs
- Make a business case to employers for the benefits of integrating core competencies—and the costs of not doing so



# Health Pathway

## CDC Coordinated School Health

- Integrate 8 Core competencies into health education (as part of *Safety and Injury Prevention*)

## Pediatricians and family practice physicians

- Make workplace safety and health part of communication with young people

# Window of Opportunity

- Workplace safety and health should be part of the national conversation on jobs and the future of the workforce.
- Not preparing a safe, skilled, and ready workforce results in:
  - More workplace injuries and illness
  - Higher health care and related costs
  - Lower productivity
  - Loss of economic viability and competitiveness

# BSC Can Help

- Support the mission of the NIOSH Safe-Skilled-Ready Workforce Initiative
- Suggest other pathways for integrating core competencies into existing workforce development programs, school curricula, youth programs, etc.
- Propose ways to advance the idea that a ready worker is a skilled worker and a safe and healthy worker

# Safe·Skilled·Ready

**Thank you**

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[www.cdc.gov/niosh/Safe-Skilled-Ready/default.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/Safe-Skilled-Ready/default.html)