

Position Statement – U.S. Workforce Development

Executive Summary

Our company is a leading science and technology company with more than 13,000 U.S. employees across 70 facilities in 20 states around the country. Over half of these facilities contain manufacturing, and our high technology requires that we grow our U.S. workforce and recruit candidates to work on the cutting edge of science.

However, as new technologies change the global economy and reshape the employment landscape, many companies, including ours, are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill a growing number of technical positions.¹ Fewer candidates possess the requisite technical qualifications for these positions, and the pool of potential candidates is further limited due to low unemployment rates.

To address this problem, we support workforce development programs to train candidates with the skills and training necessary to qualify for these employment opportunities. We also support efforts to modernize the perception many Americans have of manufacturing and support smart immigration policies that attract and retain skilled workers in the United States.

Why It Matters

As the global economy continues to change and advance with the emergence of new technologies, so too have the skills that millions of American workers need both to secure access to employment and advance in their careers. Lower-skilled jobs are disappearing and are being replaced by higher-skilled jobs. These higher-skilled jobs are necessary for companies to foster innovation, bolster productivity, and remain globally competitive.

However, companies are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill available positions, and they often cannot take on more work because of those vacancies.

Workers with strong technical skills play an especially integral role in fueling manufacturing growth. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over a million new American manufacturing jobs have become available over the past seven years, but more than 450,000 of them have yet to be filled.² Many of these positions require specialized skills and technical knowledge that workers displaced from old jobs and new graduates often do not possess.

As critical as it is to adequately prepare and train workers with the necessary skills to ensure their success, it is equally important to ensure companies can recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all regards, including foreign workers. Reforming U.S. immigration laws will keep talent within the United States and is therefore essential to maintaining America's competitiveness.

Our Position

As a company with a major manufacturing presence in the United States, we support workforce development programs that provide job seekers with the skills and training necessary to pursue a variety of employment opportunities for which there is critical demand at many of our U.S. Life Science and Electronics facilities.

- Our company's manufacturing operations are advanced, modern, and growing, and we are constantly recruiting skilled workers for open manufacturing jobs across the United States. Some of these jobs require a high school education and on-the-job training, while others require one or two years of vocational training or work towards an associate degree.
- However, we have found that many applicants for these positions lack the necessary reading, math, and problem-solving skills. Many of these applicants also have limited or no technical education or experience.

¹ Business News Daily Editor. (March 4, 2020). The Skills Gap Is Costing Businesses Dearly. Business News Daily. Retrieved from <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6038-skills-gaps-cost-companies-thousands.html>

² Job Openings and Labor Turnover – September 2020. (November 10, 2020). Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>



- We believe that state and federal policymakers must promote and pass legislation that will direct funding to and increase funding for vocational training and programs focused on instruction in reading, math, problem solving, and the technical skills necessary for success in the manufacturing sector.
- We also encourage lawmakers to support policies that foster collaboration between the private sector and the public education system, including public private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships can address gaps in workforce skills as well as support the public sector in understanding the skills that the private sector requires when hiring new employees.
- We are working with the German Embassy in Washington, DC, to promote its Skills Initiative, which aims to bring together German and U.S. businesses and local education and training providers to develop training programs best suited to business needs.³

We also believe it is critical to change the perception of manufacturing from the factory floors of the past to the high-tech, scientific clean rooms of the present and future.

- Our company is working to engage America's youth through such programs as our Curiosity Cube™ to increase interest in science and technology and allow students to experience firsthand what the advanced manufacturing experience of today and tomorrow looks like.
- It is essential that we and our manufacturing peers continue to engage with students, parents, and educators to reinforce a positive message about the exciting career opportunities that exist within manufacturing.
- We also strongly support legislation that provides the necessary resources for secondary schools and community colleges to teach manufacturing skills and to purchase requisite training equipment.

We are committed to diversity and inclusion in our workplaces. To this end, we also support smart immigration policies that attract and retain skilled foreign workers in the United States.

- Our company supports many of the immigration policies advocated by the National Association for Manufacturers, including improving the employment-based green card system and streamlining and simplifying the temporary (non-immigrant) visa process. These changes would allow for temporary workers and immigrants to meet our company's needs without displacing American workers as well as enhance our company's flexibility in responding to changing business demands.⁴
- We also support reforming the current employment verification system to make it more reliable, accurate, and efficient. The current employment verification system creates undue liability for employers, causes increased administrative burdens, and does not deter identity fraud.⁵

About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and electronics. Around 58,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2020, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 17.5 billion in 66 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Electronics. Since its founding 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. For more information about Merck, KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, visit www.emdgroup.com.

³ German Federal Foreign Office. (2020). Skills Initiative. Retrieved from <https://www.germany.info/us-en/welcome/wirtschaft/03-Wirtschaft>

⁴ National Association of Manufacturers. (2019). A Way Forward. Retrieved from https://www.nam.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/IIHR.ImmigrationReform.Report.2019.FINAL_.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

