

Wanted: High-quality jobs and a skilled workforce

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As the United States slowly recovers from the Great Recession, it needs to focus on creating not just more jobs but more high-quality jobs and providing workers with the skills necessary to perform those jobs, according to an article in the *Winter Issues in Science and Technology*.

Because too many U.S. workers lack the education and skills required for high-paying jobs, employers often choose to compete based only on low costs rather than on better worker performance, writes Harry Holzer of Georgetown University. He argues that the [federal government](#) should make it easier for employers to create and fill good [jobs](#) with highly productive workers.

“To do so,” Holzer writes, “it needs to create and fund more-coherent and more-effective education and workforce-development systems. These systems should place their primary emphasis on providing more assistance to at-risk youth, both in school and out, and also to adult workers who are disadvantaged. Furthermore, these programs should take advantage of the latest evidence on effective training to maximize their impact.”

Also in the Winter [Issues in Science and Technology](#), Stephen Ezell of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation in Washington, D.C., outlines a strategy for revitalizing U.S. manufacturing, which suffered a precipitous decline during the past decade. Key to a reversal, he writes, will be greatly expanded government efforts to support the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized (SME) firms.

Other industrialized countries, Ezell writes, have recognized that because SME manufacturers account for more than 98 percent of manufacturing firms in almost all economies, they form the backbone of a nation's industrial supply chain. They have also recognized that despite their importance, SME manufacturers lag behind larger manufacturers in adopting new technologies, increasing productivity, and exporting. Accordingly, an increasing number of countries have introduced and robustly funded a broad array of policies and programs to support their SME manufacturers.

Unfortunately, Ezell says, the [United States](#) is trailing badly in these efforts. Indeed, a major reason that U.S. manufacturing has declined so much is the lack of support for SME firms, he says.

The Winter [Issues in Science and Technology](#) also includes articles on reducing oil use in transportation, California's pioneering transportation strategy, the promise of high-performance homes, and improving spent-fuel storage at nuclear reactors.

Provided by University of Texas at Dallas

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