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The Manufacturing Institute

» 2024 Annual Report





➤ A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Manufacturing is the backbone of the American economy, driving innovation, growth and opportunity. As the industry evolves, so do the challenges of attracting, training and retaining a skilled workforce. The Manufacturing Institute is the **authority in manufacturing workforce development and education**. Our team of experts is dedicated to developing solutions that empower individuals, strengthen businesses and secure the industry's long-term competitiveness.

The MI plays a central role in the manufacturing workforce ecosystem, collaborating with and convening manufacturers, educational institutions, economic development organizations and communities across the U.S. These partnerships are essential to building a sustainable talent pipeline. Thanks to corporate and philanthropic support, we were able to further scale our initiatives and expand our scope ensuring lasting benefits for manufacturers and the communities they support.

Through our programming, insights and platforms, **the MI serves as a trusted adviser, providing manufacturers with solutions to their workforce challenges**. We work with more than 1,000 companies to support outreach, education and training and reach more than 25,000 individuals each year through our programming.

The MI achieved significant milestones across all our programs in 2024. **FAME USA** celebrated five years under the MI's stewardship, doubling in size and continuing to set the standard for workforce training. Our **Women MAKE America** initiative empowered and recognized hundreds of women in the industry, fostering mentorship and leadership opportunities that strengthen the sector. Meanwhile, **Heroes MAKE America** continued to expand its reach, providing transitioning service members, veterans and the broader military community with the skills and connections needed for meaningful careers in manufacturing.

Throughout 2024, the MI remained a leading convener, hosting more than 220 events to share insights and support employers, workers and partners. From national summits to regional roundtables, these gatherings fostered collaboration, highlighted best practices and equipped stakeholders with actionable strategies to address workforce challenges.

The MI moves into 2025 with a highly engaged team inspired by our work and ready to create lasting impact. Thank you for supporting the MI. We look forward to continuing to work with you to build a resilient manufacturing workforce prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Carolyn Lee
President and Executive Director
The Manufacturing Institute

› Providing Solutions to the Workforce Challenge

The Manufacturing Institute, the 501(c)3 workforce development and education affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers, is providing innovative solutions to help manufacturers build and strengthen their workforce, while offering the latest insights and practices on workforce development. The MI is an indispensable source for knowledge and initiatives that are building and strengthening the workforce of today and tomorrow, ensuring manufacturers remain competitive.

The latest version of the MI's far-reaching workforce study, conducted with Deloitte, indicates that manufacturers in the U.S. will need to fill 3.8 million jobs over the next 10 years, and that as the need for higher-level skills grows, nearly half of these positions could remain unfilled. As the industry evolves to a position of strength, the need for both skilled and entry-level workers continues to grow. Even in the face of the projected skills gap, manufacturers must emphasize retention and upskilling as they work to recruit and develop the next generation of talent. Across these fronts, manufacturers can rely on the MI for the essential resources and tools they need to address their challenges.



FAME provides an excellent forum for manufacturing companies in the same region to work together on providing the necessary exposure and skills to our future workforce."

– Dev Ahuja, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Novelis

› Scaling Global-Best Training

In 2024, the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME USA) celebrated five years with the MI. Created in 2010 by Toyota, the program was entrusted to the MI in 2019. Since then, it has grown enormously, with the number of chapters doubling in size under the MI's stewardship.

2024 Highlights:

- Scaled to more than 40 chapters across 16 states (up from 20 chapters in 9 states in 2019)
- Nearly 500 employer partners (up from 220 partners in 2019)
- 1,300 enrolled students and 2,300 graduates since 2012
- 90% employment rate upon graduation

FAME continues to be recognized as the new American model of skills training for manufacturers. This expansion underscores FAME's value to manufacturers, who consistently highlight its effectiveness in building the skilled workforce they need.

FAME also hosted the 2024 FAME National Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The convening brought together 250 representatives from manufacturers, colleges and other workforce partners from across the country for three days of network building and solution sharing.

The conference saw a 25% year-over-year growth in attendance. Notably, the 2024 conference welcomed "Future FAME" representatives for the first time. These attendees, not yet active in the FAME network, attended to further educate themselves on FAME and develop concrete next steps for starting a new chapter. As of this report, more than half of these reps are now supporting chapters enrolling students in 2025 or moving into FAME Academy in 2025. This success has led to the evolution of this learning track for the 2025 FAME National Conference.



› Connecting Manufacturers with Military Talent

Heroes MAKE America continues to serve as a vital bridge between the military community and the manufacturing sector, offering transitioning service members, military spouses, members of the National Guard and Reserves and veterans a pathway to impactful careers.

- HMA connected with more than 2,300 individuals through Heroes Connect events and more than 1,125 at virtual and in-person career fairs.
 - One participant said, “The program not only introduces you to the manufacturing world—it prepares you for everything that is around it. How to correctly write your resume, how to match a military background with civilian life, how to translate military vocabulary to civilian vocabulary and from writing a resume to emailing with potential employers and preparing for interviews, it was a little bit of everything.”
- The Heroes MAKE America SkillBridge training program had 354 graduates in 2024, for a program total of 1,634 graduates and more than 8,200 certifications earned.
 - The initiative’s placement success was equally impressive, with a 92% placement rate with more than 350 companies in 48 states.
- Through the Manufacturing Readiness Project, with additional funding from Walmart.org, we expanded our efforts to translate military skills to civilian credentials. This expansion provides a more comprehensive view of job seekers’ abilities, helping employers recognize the full scope of a military member’s experience. Further, it advances our work to promote the adoption and acceptance of digital skills and badging systems, both among job seekers and employers, enhancing workforce readiness and opportunity.
 - 2,864 Manufacturing Readiness Badges have been issued to date.
- HMA was selected as one of eight new additions to the Department of Labor’s Employment Navigator and Partnership Program. This partnership with ENPP allows HMA to extend its reach to 36 additional military installations worldwide, significantly expanding its role as a premier employment resource for the military community.



Veterans embody resilience, adaptability and dedication—qualities that are at the heart of manufacturing excellence. At Johnson & Johnson, we’re honored to work alongside Heroes MAKE America to support veterans in their transition to civilian careers, providing them with opportunities to build rewarding futures in manufacturing.”

– Kathy Wengel, Executive Vice President and Chief Technical Operations & Risk Officer, Johnson & Johnson and NAM Board Chair



➤ Women MAKE America

The MI hosted the 13th annual Women MAKE Awards gala, honoring women who are driving innovation, strengthening their companies and shaping the future of manufacturing. These awardees—recognized for their leadership, expertise and mentorship—serve as role models for the next generation. Since its inception, the Women MAKE Awards have recognized roughly 1,700 outstanding individuals.

- The momentum behind this initiative continues to grow. In fall 2024, the MI received 702 nominations from 220 companies for the 2025 Women MAKE Awards, 79 of which were first-time nominators.
- After two years of mentorship programs, the MI has trained and matched more than 600 women, equipping them with the professional development, guidance and connections needed to thrive in the field.

To assess the impact of the Women MAKE Awards and mentorship programs among individual women and their networks, with the support of General Motors, the MI conducted a study to determine whether programs like these can help create a “multiplier effect”—where investing in women helps manufacturers attract and retain more women in the industry.

Key Findings:

- 98% of participants said they would recommend manufacturing to other women.
- 89% have connected other women to opportunities at their company.
- 84% said the WMA mentorship program encouraged them to continue pursuing a career in manufacturing.

The study identified practices that are designed to help companies harness the positive experiences of women in manufacturing, empowering them to be ambassadors and recruiters, ultimately driving a multiplier effect across the industry.

One woman interviewed for the study shared that she “felt more confident as a woman in manufacturing, with valuable connections both inside and outside of my company.” Another noted that it “gave me more confidence to back up my growing competence, experience and expertise, allowing me to feel more comfortable ‘raising my hand’ for more challenging roles and projects.”



The Women MAKE network helped me realize the many qualities and experiences uniting all the women who have been inducted into this amazing network. The MI's Women MAKE initiative provides a platform for role models and mentors to encourage women to enter the field and succeed in it.”

– Susan Elkington, Executive Technical Advisor, Toyota Global and North American Sustainability and Women MAKE America Chair

➤ Advocating for Effective Policies

The MI focused on key workforce policy priorities, leaning on the input we have received from manufacturers of all sizes combined with our experience on the ground developing workforce strategies around the country. In 2024, we voiced manufacturers priorities by supporting the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through the A Stronger Workforce for America Act, the expansion of short-term Pell Grants and by providing comments on the Department of Labor's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for apprenticeship standards.

The MI provided a letter to the House of Representatives stating manufacturers' strong support for the A Stronger Workforce for America Act and short-term Pell Grants and provided comments during the deliberation of WIOA reauthorization. While A Stronger Workforce for America Act passed the House in 2024, it ultimately was not considered by the Senate; the bicameral, bipartisan proposal will be a strong starting point to seek reauthorization for WIOA in the 119th Congress.

The proposed rulemaking by the Department of Labor would have altered the Registered Apprenticeship system significantly. After convening with manufacturers that would have been impacted by this proposal, the MI provided compelling comments to the DOL throughout the process. These comments and others resulted in a win when the DOL withdrew the proposal prior to the end of 2024.

➤ MFG Day

In our efforts to continue to change the perception of modern manufacturing, the MI organized and led another successful MFG Day, celebrated nationally on Oct. 4, 2024. To assist companies in planning impactful events, the MI hosted a series of four webinars, attracting more than 1,500 registered attendees. Additionally, the MI provided toolkits on MFGDay.com for event hosts, action partners and government officials, which amassed a total of 2,595 downloads. While MFG Day officially kicked off the first Friday of October, events began in September and continued throughout October and beyond. Manufacturers registered more than 740 events across the U.S., and MFG Day generated 29.6 million impressions across social media. Demonstrating growing enthusiasm, 834 contacts signed up through MFGDay.com to receive MFG Day messaging. Its success was amplified by dedicated sponsors, who supported the development of the MI's toolkits, webinars and promotional resources.



In 2024, the MI highlighted the impact MFG Day can have beyond just engaging students by featuring events that included veterans and spouses participating in the MI's Heroes MAKE America initiative. The MI team was on the ground in Kansas with manufacturers for a community-organized day of plant tours and discussions, engaging with manufacturers, students and local training partners to highlight career opportunities in manufacturing. MI President and Executive Director Carolyn Lee toured Bradbury Group's facility with students and later visited four McPherson manufacturers with Heroes MAKE America participants, emphasizing connections between the military community and the industry. This day reinforced the main premise behind the MFG Day movement, that by opening their doors, manufacturers can change perceptions and recruit the next generation of workers—of all ages.



► Driving Workforce Solutions

The MI's third annual Workforce Summit in Minneapolis, Minnesota, brought together more than 275 attendees to learn real-world, solutions-oriented approaches to solving the talent equation. With 35 engaging sessions, the event convened manufacturing leaders, thought leaders, educators, business association leaders and HR professionals committed to shaping the future of the manufacturing workforce. Participant feedback underscored the Summit's value, praising its tailored content and practical strategies for addressing today's workforce challenges. The MI also secured a record number of sponsors that joined the Summit and added additional opportunities for attendees to explore solutions-oriented services that are available to the manufacturing industry.

Participant Feedback:



"I frequently attend workforce conferences across various industries, and this was one of the most well-organized events I've ever experienced."

"It was humbling to realize that our company isn't alone in facing these challenges and to hear how others have worked to improve their situations."



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