



Support American Innovation by Enhancing Workforce Development Programs

Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA)

The Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) is the nation's leading trade association representing motor vehicle parts suppliers and represents over 1,000 companies that manufacture components, technologies, and systems for use in passenger vehicles and heavy trucks. MEMA members provide original equipment (OE) components to new vehicles, as well as aftermarket parts to service, maintain, and repair millions of vehicles on the road today. In total, **vehicle parts manufacturers represent the largest sector of manufacturing jobs in the United States**, directly employing over 871,000 people [in all 50 states](#) and generating 2.4 percent of U.S. GDP. Our members lead the way in developing advanced, transformative technologies that enable safer, smarter, and more efficient vehicles.

Vehicle suppliers drive innovation for the motor vehicle industry. On average, it takes anywhere between 5-10 years of supplier investments for a product to go from the initial stage of product concept research to product manufacturing and deployment. For this reason, many vehicle suppliers are already working on the next generation of new technologies that will help keep America a leader in the global marketplace as passenger vehicles and heavy trucks evolve to meet consumer needs. However, to implement new technologies and keep the North American supply chain robust, suppliers need a strong skilled workforce to ensure this production remains in the United States.

In quarterly surveys of member companies conducted by MEMA's divisions ([AASA](#), [HDMA](#), [OESA](#)), hourly skilled workers ranked as the most critical job shortage companies were currently facing as they struggle to get their hourly employees to return to plants or find replacement workers. The shortage of skilled workers has been an ongoing challenge, made worse by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In the aftermarket industry alone, 66 percent of those who participated in the member survey feared that their labor force is insufficient for the fourth quarter. An insufficient labor force can mean delays in production and service that result in long-term negative impacts on companies, their operations, and employees. Despite the unemployment levels, there is a significant skills gap that hinders many workers from obtaining these high paying jobs.

Suppliers and the motor vehicle industry are innovators focused on technology development and manufacturing. They plan the next generation of advanced vehicles, whether equipped with automated driving systems or electric and hybrid fuel cell powered vehicles. To do this, our skilled workforce needs are evolving. Suppliers are focused on training workers to work with high-speed video cameras, advanced robotics, precision assembly, Internet of Things (IOT) technologies to improve production efficiency and program automated manufacturing systems. Additional focus from training programs on these advanced skills, such as workers trained in software development and data sciences, are more critical than ever for the industry.

Thankfully, there are some state workforce development programs in place that are already utilized by vehicle suppliers. Many of our member companies rely on workforce development programs, such as Michigan's Going PRO Talent Fund, to receive the tools and funds necessary to train workers. As states reassess their budgets, it is important to remember the positive long-term impact proper workforce development programs can have on states and their economies as well as the impact advanced workforce programs can have on a state's job market. **MEMA and our member companies, together with our Governors and Lieutenant Governors, can help ensure we are leading the conversation on new vehicle technologies and retaining high-paying automotive jobs in North America.** To work with us, contact Melanie Weiland at mweiland@mema.org.