

OPPORTUNITY
AMERICA



Jobs and Careers Coalition

CAPITOL HILL POLICY DINNERS

What. A series of small, private, off-the-record dinners bringing members of Congress together with employers and employer representatives concerned about workforce development and skills training.

Who we are. The Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition is a Washington-based business group focused on job training and workforce development. Its primary goals: shining new light on the need for workforce training, driving a skills agenda on Capitol Hill, highlighting successful state initiatives and changing national perceptions of technical careers and career training. Members include employers and employer associations from a broad range of industries experiencing skill shortages – manufacturing, IT, construction, hospitality and health care, among others.

Why a dinner series. The goal at each dinner: a single, focused, off-the-record conversation about workforce development and skills training – business leaders and lawmakers strategizing together about next steps. It's an opportunity for employers and employer representatives to describe their workforce needs and share their views about career training, while policymakers provide insight into the legislative agenda and offer their views on what business can do to help.

How it works. Dinners are small, targeted, designed to be as convenient as possible for lawmakers. We meet in a private room at a restaurant near the Hill. There are typically 15 to 20 people at the table. The guest lawmaker is invited to say a few words, followed by a casual, collaborative back and forth – a single conversation around the table through the end of the evening.

Who attends. Employers and employer representatives from a range of sectors experiencing workforce shortages: manufacturing, IT, construction, hospitality and health care, among others. Whenever possible, the group includes some employers from the member's district. Among the lawmakers who have attended this and a similar dinner series in the past: Reps. Paul Ryan, Jim Jordan, Susan Brooks, Glenn Thompson, Henry Cuellar, Sens. Kelly Ayotte and Michael Bennet.

Opportunity America is a Washington-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility – work, skills, careers, entrepreneurship and inclusion. The organization works to advance more equal opportunity by influencing policymakers at the state and federal levels and encouraging engagement by civil society, including employers.

September 22, 2014