

TRENDS AFFECTING BUSINESS AND EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

In these early years of the 21st Century, unprecedented demographic changes, major technological developments, and the expanding global economy are affecting the way we live and the economic vitality of the United States and Illinois. A convergence of multiple, complex trends has resulted in a situation in which businesses are scrambling to remain globally competitive, electronic communication has created instantaneous global connections, and workers of the 20th Century need to develop new skills to remain competitive in the 21st Century.

The convergence of these trends has created several challenges for the U.S. and Illinois: a decline of the middle class, projected shortages of skilled workers, increasing global competition, and a new set of knowledge and skills needed by all citizens. Keeping Illinois competitive will require

- The simultaneous creation of new higher-paying jobs
- Increasing the science and mathematics skills of all citizens
- Increasing levels of educational attainment, especially for black and Hispanic populations
- Increasing productivity in occupations with projected critical shortages
- Recruiting and retaining the most innovative, skilled workers