Advancing Skills-Based Hiring: From Strategy to Implementation

Susan Kraut, President & CEO of the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce, recently completed a national skills-based hiring training series through the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Foundation and has been designated as a Skills-Based Hiring "Activator"—an official trainer and consultant supporting employers in implementing these practices. The training is delivered in partnership with the Rework America Alliance, a national initiative focused on expanding access to quality jobs by advancing skills-based hiring and recognizing experience-based capabilities.

This work builds on Kraut's participation as a 2023 ACCE Economic Mobility Fellow, where the focus was on strengthening workforce ecosystems, expanding access to living-wage opportunities, and addressing systemic barriers to employment. Together, these experiences are helping shape a more intentional and actionable approach to aligning local talent with business needs.

One key takeaway: many of today's workforce challenges are less about talent shortages and more about skills alignment. As employers continue to navigate hiring and retention pressures, skills-based hiring offers a practical framework for redefining roles, evaluating candidates based on demonstrated ability, and expanding access to untapped talent pools.

With the Activator designation, Kraut is equipped to work directly with employers and partners to translate these concepts into practice—helping organizations rethink job descriptions, hiring processes, and onboarding strategies to better align with real-world skills.

Through this lens, chambers are uniquely positioned to serve as conveners, educators, and translators—helping businesses move from awareness to implementation.

At the Effingham County Chamber, this work will be integrated into upcoming programming, employer engagement strategies, and broader workforce initiatives, with an emphasis on practical application and measurable impact.

As workforce dynamics continue to evolve, skills-based hiring represents a meaningful opportunity for chambers to support both business competitiveness and economic mobility within their communities.

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