
VICA

Vocational Industrial Clubs of America

VICA is a national organization that adds a vital component to local vocational training: attitude. Although VICA stands for Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, it's not an extracurricular activity. Schools use VICA to bring employers into the classroom to teach leadership skills while improving job skill training.

Each year, about 270,000 people join VICA in 14,000 local chapters. In 1991, more than 41,000 student members joined in 2,780 construction trades programs, including carpentry, brick masonry, plumbing and welding. Construction trades students also joined VICA through their cooperative education programs.

VICA programs emphasize total quality at work: high ethical standards, superior workmanship, life-long education and pride in the dignity of work. Its students develop self-esteem and skills in leadership, teamwork and communications. VICA promotes understanding of the free enterprise system and involvement in community service activities.

To do this, VICA has created unique working partnerships among students, educators, business, organized labor and government. About 14,000 teachers and school administrators serve as

professional VICA members. And 450 corporations, trade associations and labor unions actively support the national organization with financial donations, in-kind contributions and involvement of their people in VICA activities.

**VICA is a
source of
quality
entry level
employees.**

The basic value of VICA partnerships at the local, state and national levels is that business and industry provide immediate and timely feedback to educators. This enables VICA programs to be revised quickly to respond to current and anticipated employer needs.

For those employers, VICA is a source of quality entry level employees. Employers also work with their peers, and sometimes their competitors, which serves as an information network. Employers also benefit from local publicity and a more professional image through the contact with local VICA chapter activities.

VICA partnerships are at work in many ways, providing students with recognition for their skill and leadership achievement. These partnerships are particularly evident in major national programs such as the VICA U.S. Skill Olympics, VICA Professional Development Program and VICA Network.

VICA's most prominent program is its United States Skill Olympics. More than 3,000 students enter 55 job or leadership skill contests. Industry sets the standards for the contests and provides judges, funding and equipment for the \$6.5 million event. Welding and bricklaying were among the first contests organized in the Skill Olympics' 25-year history.

The annual Skill Olympics is a proven motivational tool. The winners of local contests advance to state or regional events, and the best make it to the national competition. The next stop

is the International Youth Skill Olympics, held every two years. In 1991, Florida welding student Robert Pope earned a gold medal over tough competitors from Europe and Asia. The key to winning is the training the U.S. team receives from industry and trade associations.

Because the contest rules are set by industry experts, local VICA instructors can use the rules as basic competencies for their classrooms. The Skill Olympics program helps keep vocational programs up to date, gives teachers the leverage to acquire new technology, and draws local industry people into the schools.

In the VICA Professional Development Program, employers help students progress through 59 separate job skills. These include goal setting, career plan-

Employers benefit through local publicity and a more professional image.

ning and community service. VICA has separate programs for high school, post secondary and automotive trades students, and more are planned in specific occupational areas.

The VICA Network helps VICA chapters and employers find each other and work together for better training and employment opportunities. They periodically receive a directory that lists chapters and employers by location and occupational area.

To find VICA chapters in your area or elsewhere, telephone the national VICA headquarters in Leesburg, Virginia, at (703) 777-8810. National VICA will put you in touch with a state VICA director or a local chapter. Schools and two-year colleges offering vocational programs also can be found through your local school superintendent or community college.