Celebrating Years of Achievement
“The Heldrich Center for Workforce Development’s research yields vital evidence about the programs and strategies that can both improve the productivity of the workforce and increase economic opportunities for unemployed Americans. We’ve got a lot to be proud of, but with millions of Americans out of work, there is much more work to be done.”

Carl E. Van Horn
Director & Professor, Heldrich Center

“Thanks to the staff’s leadership and hard work, the Heldrich Center has become a national center of excellence for workforce development research. We’ve accomplished a great deal in 15 years — from ideas on paper to a thriving research center whose work contributes to strengthening our nation’s workforce.”

John J. Heldrich
Chair, National Advisory Board, Heldrich Center
OUR MISSION, OUR PRIORITIES

Successful economic development and job creation depend on a reliable supply of workers whose skills reflect the rapidly changing demands of industry and technology. American workers need high-quality, timely information about the labor market and how they can prepare to be successful in getting and retaining good jobs with good wages.

Employers, educators, nonprofit organizations, government policymakers, and workers rely upon the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development for new ideas and independent, reliable evidence about improving the education and training of the workforce.

The Center’s research priorities include:

- Work trends and economic analysis
- Understanding the linkages between industry needs and workforce preparation
- Developing strategies for reemploying workers
- Evaluating workforce programs and policies
- Improving opportunities for workers with disabilities

Since its founding, the Heldrich Center has been awarded more than $65 million from federal and state agencies, corporations, foundations, labor organizations, nonprofit groups, and individuals. It also raised $16 million from the State of New Jersey to build a state-of-the-art research and conference facility at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The Heldrich Center is frequently called on to provide policy and research recommendations to agencies of the federal government, as well as testimony to Congressional committees and staff. The Heldrich Center has also conducted research or technical assistance projects in 33 states. Over 350 Heldrich Center research reports, surveys, evaluations, presentations, media releases, and issue briefs have been widely distributed to policymakers; educators; business, labor, and community leaders; and academics. The mass media routinely features the work of the Heldrich Center and its experts. The Heldrich Center also hosts other national thought leaders on the workforce and economy at meetings and conferences in New Jersey and Washington, D.C.
OUR MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Work Trends: Chronicling the Attitudes of American Workers

Since 1998, the Center’s acclaimed Work Trends series has tracked the views of American workers and employers through a decade and a half of unprecedented economic turmoil. Interviews with more than 25,000 American workers documented the impact of economic recessions and rapid economic change. Today, the release of each new Work Trends report attracts national and international coverage from hundreds of leading media outlets. The New York Times has featured Work Trends reports on its front page and in its Sunday Review section. Other leading media outlets — including the Associated Press, National Public Radio, the PBS NewsHour, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Huffington Post, and the BBC — also regularly feature findings from Work Trends reports.

Work Trends in the Media

The following are selected recent headlines from major media outlets that reported on Work Trends findings:

- “Bumps on the road back to work, National Public Radio, September 5, 2011
- “Long-term unemployed discouraged, but still looking for jobs, new study finds,” Huffington Post, September 1, 2011
- “Many with new college degree find the job market humbling,” The New York Times, May 19, 2011
- “Fresh out of college, slim hope for a job,” CNN, May 19, 2011
INDUSTRY SECTOR STRATEGIES: CHARTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF U.S. EMPLOYERS

Through several major research projects on a wide range of industrial sectors, the Heldrich Center is helping determine the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in today’s economy. This research, undertaken with support from the National Science Foundation and several federal and state government agencies, provides educators, workforce investment professionals, students, and job seekers essential information about the specific skills in demand by private- and public-sector employers. In the spirit of the Center’s “Solutions at Work” vision, the Center has translated its in-depth research into business-education partnerships that lead to better-designed education and training programs, and more efficient matching of qualified candidates to job openings in growing sectors of the U.S. economy.

More than two dozen research reports have profiled emerging skill requirements and high-growth occupations in areas such as:

- Health Care
- Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics
- Utilities
- Finance
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Nanotechnology
- Construction
- Life Sciences
- Green Jobs

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS: GETTING PEOPLE BACK TO WORK

In the wake of the devastating 2001 terrorist attack on New York City’s World Trade Center, the Heldrich Center organized 300 community groups and private agencies into a coordinated network serving unemployed workers in lower Manhattan. The resulting Employment Assistance Program (EAP) counseled and retrained more than 11,000 people, many of whom moved on to new career paths and improved wages. Lessons learned from the EAP experience were summarized in a series of Heldrich Center research reports and conferences that will help guide training efforts if future manmade or natural disasters bring widespread joblessness to an entire urban center.
Improving employment opportunities is the central focus of the Heldrich Center’s research and technical assistance on working-age adults with disabilities. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy selected the Heldrich Center to establish a national research and technical assistance center dedicated to improving the employment and economic independence of adults with disabilities. This $6 million, five-year project, working in partnership with the governors and cabinet members of leading states, created a nationwide network for sharing promising practices in disability employment efforts. The Heldrich Center is also conducting research that will lead to a better understanding of the implications of an aging workforce with disabilities (see http://www.ntarcenter.org).

In New Jersey, the Heldrich Center works closely with state officials and community leaders to put into practice quality workforce strategies that better connect youth and adults with disabilities to higher education and employment.

As part of its efforts to identify effective approaches to improving employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities, the Heldrich Center is evaluating eight Kessler Foundation Signature Employment Grants designed to test innovative strategies to enhance the skills of people with disabilities. The Heldrich Center’s evaluations help each Kessler grantee identify components of their programs that are effective and those that can be improved.

“The Heldrich Center has long recognized the importance of employment and work in the lives of people with disabilities. In just a short period of time, the Center has developed a national reputation as a major thought leader in the area of disability, aging, and work, and our research and evaluation efforts are now widely read and recognized as major contributions to the disability employment and workforce fields.”

Kathy Krepcio
Executive Director, Heldrich Center
IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

To enable workers and job seekers to find the most effective training programs for the skills they need to master, the Heldrich Center developed a statewide Consumer Report Card for the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the State Employment and Training Commission. This powerful web-based tool (http://www.njtopps.com) reports on the performance of New Jersey’s workforce training providers and gives policymakers and potential students detailed information on each program’s track record for placing trainees in meaningful, long-term jobs.

During an era of high unemployment and declining budgets, public, private, and nonprofit organizations need to channel their scarce resources to programs that work. To identify which workforce programs are effective and how they can be strengthened, the Heldrich Center conducts evaluations of occupational training, basic skills, and education programs. For example, the Heldrich Center used earnings data from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to evaluate the effectiveness of a workforce development program in Newark, New Jersey that prepared participants for careers in the construction industry.
OUR NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

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Heldrich Center national advisory board, 2010
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ABOUT THE HELDRICH CENTER

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, based at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, is a dynamic research and policy center devoted to strengthening the nation’s workforce. It is one of the nation’s leading university-based centers dedicated to helping America’s workers and employers respond to a rapidly changing 21st Century economy.

The Center’s motto —“Solutions at Work”— reflects its commitment to offering practical solutions, based on independent research, that benefit employers, workers, and job seekers. The Center’s policy recommendations and programs serve a wide range of Americans at all skill levels.

Learn more about the Heldrich Center at http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu.
“...it is clear that the Heldrich Center is one of the elite centers in the nation that is engaged in research, both basic and applied, in workforce matters.”

Heldrich Center External Review Committee Report, 2010