

The Power of Associations

There are nearly 64,000 trade and professional associations in the U.S., representing literally every industry, profession and interest that one can name.

Associations make broad contributions to American life. They are an essential piece of our national, state, and local economies. They create jobs in every state. Their measurable economic benefits include more than 1.3 million jobs for Americans and a total payroll of nearly \$51 billion. Beyond their economic impact, however, are vital roles in educating the nation's workforce, and developing voluntary industry standards to keep families safe. They illustrate how America works best when we work together.

Advancing the Workforce

Each year, associations provide millions of American workers across every industry and state with critical post-college skills training required for professional success and career advancement. Associations proactively and purposefully create centralized training programs, certifications and standards to ensure individuals, industries and society-at-large benefit from a strong and vibrant workforce.

- 57 million adults in America take formal work-related courses or training each year, and more than 69 percent of those individuals receive those training courses from either a private business or a professional association.
- In total, associations account for more than 315,000 meetings held in the U.S. each year, with 59.5 million participants in attendance.
- Most associations (88 percent), regardless of type or size, report sponsoring an annual meeting or exhibition, with a median attendance of 803 registrants.

Setting Product Safety and Technical Standards

Associations develop product safety and technical standards that impact consumers every day. From the mattresses we sleep on to the food that we put on our dinner tables, standard-setting in the U.S. has historically been a process driven by the private sector, with the federal government in a supporting role. Here are a couple of specific examples of association standard-setting in action:

- Earlier this year, the Food Marketing Institute and the Grocery Manufacturers Associations announced that they have adopted standardized voluntary regulations to reduce consumer confusion about what product date labels mean.
- The installation, performance and inspection of fire alarm systems are governed by standards published by the National Fire Protection Association.
- Standards for educational and psychological testing are developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

For more research on the impact of associations, visit www.ThePowerOfA.org.