

Cook County and Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center Release Report to Inform Economic Recovery from Pandemic

Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President, and IMEC announced the release of a Manufacturing report spotlighting survey results from local manufacturers.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, April 29, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President, and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) announced the release of the [Manufacturing Concierge report](#),

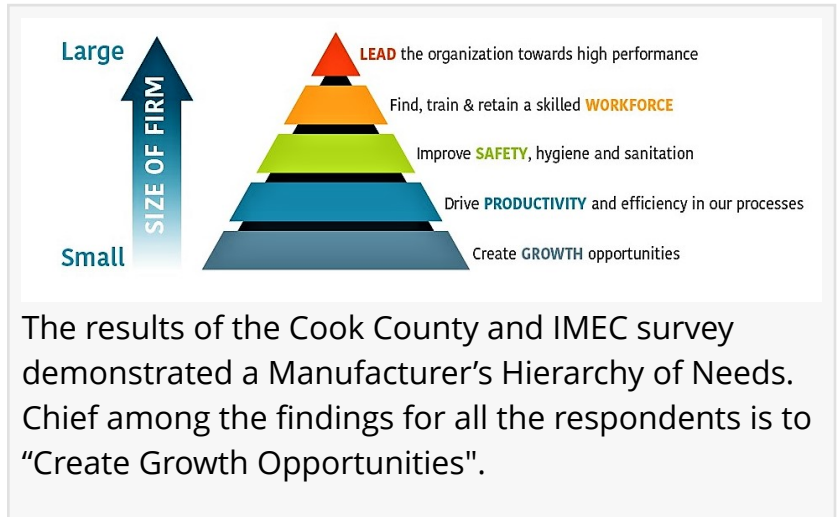
spotlighting results from a historic survey of Cook County manufacturers. Based on responses from over 1,000 manufacturing companies, the report identifies the most urgent industry needs and is being used to inform policy solutions aimed at spurring a strong manufacturing rebound from the pandemic.

One such solution, implemented in April and continuing in May, is a three-part, virtual workshop produced in partnership with the Chicago Metro Metal Consortium (CMMC) and IMEC. The goal of the workshop is to connect Illinois manufacturers with NASA and its prime contractors to bring new business opportunities to the region.

“Manufacturing continues to play a critical role in the Chicago region’s economy,” said President Preckwinkle. “It is an economic engine, driven not by a powerhouse of a few large multi-nationals, but by a vast community of people who live and work in the Chicago region.”

In Cook County, manufacturing employs nearly 200,000 people, generates \$87.5 billion in economic output, and accounts for 7.1 percent of Cook County’s gross domestic product (source IMA, Manufacturing Matters).

“We know that COVID-19 disrupted supply chains and required companies to change their use of space, modify hours, develop ways to sustain customer relationships, consider new forms of



production, protect their employees, and more,” said David Boulay, President of IMEC. “Knowing the implications of COVID will be with us for some time, we thought it essential that we connect directly with the manufacturers to understand these pressing issues.”

Among the key takeaways from the report is the clear hierarchy of needs based on the size of the manufacturer. Smaller firms (1-19 employees), which comprise nearly 70 percent of the county’s manufacturers, focused on market growth as their most pressing concern. Mid-sized firms (20-49 employees) and larger-sized firms (50-99 and 100+ employees) have a wide range of priorities beyond market growth, indicating the need for blended solutions. This finding underscores the need to segment policy solutions to address differences by company size.

“While the needs differ based on the size of the manufacturer, 69 percent of the respondents identified access to growth opportunities as their number one priority,” President Preckwinkle continued. “In response to this, we moved to quickly bring a unique opportunity to Illinois manufacturers through a three-part virtual workshop with NASA. This complimentary series provides manufacturers with the opportunity to connect with large government contractors, diversify their supply chains, and ultimately grow their business.”

The NASA workshops include “How to Do Business With NASA”, “Join the NASA Supply Chain: Requirements and Resources Webinar”, and “Illinois Manufacturing Matchmaking: NASA and NASA Prime Contractors”.

In addition to creating growth opportunities, other policy recommendations coming out of the Manufacturing Concierge report include promoting access to global and local markets, facilitating global competitiveness through technology, promoting connections between firms and workforce solution providers, facilitating ease of doing business and addressing structural costs, and establishing an ongoing method to gain insights from county manufacturers.

“With this deeper understanding of the varying needs of our manufacturers of all sizes, Cook County and IMEC will work together to develop a roadmap to support our impacted manufacturing community,” concluded Preckwinkle. “We remain committed to creating policy solutions and crafting programs and services to strengthen the sector in one of the largest manufacturing counties in the nation.”

To view the report in its entirety, visit <https://www.imec.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/ccr.pdf>, or to find more information on Cook County’s resources for businesses and residents, visit <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/recovery>. For more information on the two remaining NASA workshops, scheduled for May 4 and May 18, visit <https://www.imec.org/event/nasa-illinois-session-2-050421/>

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