

The U.S. public and private sectors must collaborate to ensure the nation is producing enough skilled workers to meet the needs of its manufacturing sector, according to Michael D'Ambrose, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at Archer Daniels Midland Company (NYSE: ADM.)

Testifying before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at a panel discussion on the future of work and the U.S. workforce, D'Ambrose said that companies like ADM were already having trouble filling key positions.

"ADM already has hundreds of good-paying jobs we can't fill because there aren't enough skilled workers available to us," he told the commissioners. "And we're not alone." He noted that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has projected that within a few years, there won't be enough graduates in fields related to food and agriculture to fill the sector's roughly 60,000 annual vacancies.

D'Ambrose said the lack of qualified candidates was largely the product of an education system that isn't generating enough job-ready workers. And that failure, he added, reflects a society that places a high value on college education and views skilled trades as lesser pursuits.

"Our educational system needs to put a greater premium on turning out skilled, job-ready workers. And a big part of that challenge involves changing Americans' perceptions of the value of skilled tradespeople," D'Ambrose said. "A skilled tradesperson can earn a great salary—and live a great life—doing fulfilling work that employers value and reward."

He concluded by suggesting that the EEOC take an active role in developing a nationwide workforce-development strategy.

"The EEOC's ability to marshal resources to strengthen the linkages between school and work would be invaluable," D'Ambrose said. "We at ADM would welcome the chance to partner with the Commission and with companies in other industries to help build the diverse pool of talent our country needs. And we believe our peers in other industries would be equally excited about the opportunity."

About ADM

For more than a century, the people of [Archer Daniels Midland Company](http://www.adm.com) (NYSE: ADM) have transformed crops into products that serve the vital needs of a growing world. Today, we're one of the world's largest agricultural processors and food ingredient providers, with approximately 32,000 employees serving customers in more than 160 countries. With a global value chain that includes approximately 500 crop procurement locations, 250 ingredient manufacturing facilities, 38 innovation centers and the world's premier crop transportation network, we connect the harvest to the home, making products for food, animal feed, industrial and energy uses. Learn more at www.adm.com.

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