INDIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2026

CONNECTING · EMPOWERING · GROWING

The Indian American International Chamber of Commerce (IAICC) is dedicated to strengthening partnerships between U.S. and Indian businesses, promoting trade, innovation, workforce development, and community growth. This quarter reflects the intention in how we are shaping conversations around the workforce, growth, and the future of business

FROM THE CHAIRMEN'S DESK

Mr. Appen Menon, Esq.
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, IAICC

Dr. Shankar Rachakonda
CHAIRMAN, IAICC US & MID-ATLANTIC REGION

A Season of Momentum

Dear Members and Friends of IAICC,

What we value most about this quarter is the willingness of our community to share experience, ask thoughtful questions, and learn from one another. For us, that exchange is central to IAICC's purpose: helping leaders draw on the knowledge around them as they make decisions about their organizations and their future.

Our Beyond the Blueprint: Perspectives of Women in Leadership event brought that purpose into a personal conversation. Ms. Bharti Shah's journey to leading CTIS Inc., together with the panel's experiences, showed how leadership develops through listening, earning trust, and learning from others. What resonated with us was the importance of recognizing that unfamiliar responsibilities do not have to be navigated alone.

The value of drawing on others' experience also shaped our LATAM Unlocked: Your Gateway to Emerging Markets event. For businesses considering expansion into Latin America, local knowledge and trusted partners can help turn an unfamiliar market into a better-informed business decision. The discussion extended our leadership conversation into international growth, showing why relationships matter both within an organization and beyond its borders.

Those relationships create opportunities, but organizations also need people equipped to pursue them. Our Future-Ready Workforce in the AI Era: Leadership Strategies for Building Sector-Specific Skills event brought the conversation back to that responsibility. As AI changes how work gets done, leaders need to connect technology decisions with the capabilities their teams require. For us, this reinforced a thread running through all three events: growth depends on learning, whether we are developing as leaders, entering new markets, or preparing people for new ways of working.

We took a step toward putting that learning into practice with the launch of the AI Executive in Residence Program. Mr. Naresh Durvasula and Mr. Rakesh Dhawan joined the inaugural cohort, bringing senior technology experience to an initiative built around applied AI learning, mentorship, and project collaboration. Together with the sector-specific training pathway we are developing, this gives us a foundation for extending the quarter's conversations into practical opportunities.

As we build for the future, we also hold close the people who helped establish this community. Our thoughts are with Mr. K. V. Kumar, Founding Chairman Emeritus, IAICC, as he navigates a health challenge. We send him our warmest wishes for a speedy and full recovery, with gratitude for his longstanding commitment to the Chamber.

Thank you to our members, speakers, sponsors, and partners for making this quarter's work possible. Your participation gives these conversations their value and helps us carry the learning forward. We look forward to continuing that work together.

RECAP OF KEY EVENTS

Beyond the Blueprint: Perspectives of Women in Leadership

CTIS
SBA WOSB
CTIS

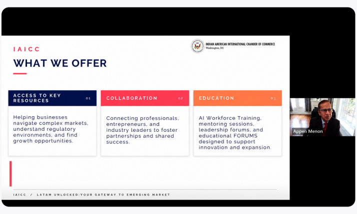
On July 23, 2026, Beyond the Blueprint: Perspectives of Women in Leadership examined how women build credibility, take on unfamiliar responsibilities, and continue growing as leaders. Hosted with CTIS, the event centered on Ms. Bharti Shah, CEO of CTIS Inc., whose leadership journey highlighted the value of listening, trusting experienced colleagues, and learning through change.

The panel brought together Ms. Bharti Shah; Ms. Sudha Mathew, President of TalTeam; and Ms. Anisha Agarwal, Director at Aurrera Health Group. Ms. Shah emphasized employee wellbeing, realistic expectations, and developing future leaders. Ms. Mathew connected her move into technology entrepreneurship with the importance of credibility, consistency, and hiring the right people. Ms. Agarwal explored leading across generations through curiosity, empathy, accountability, and psychological safety.

Moderator Dr. Aparna Arvind, CEO of Christopher Leah Consulting, Inc., connected these experiences with adaptability, mentorship, emotional intelligence, and the challenges women navigate in leadership. For members, the practical takeaway was to build trust through consistent actions, create space for questions, and support others' growth. The event reinforced that there is no single prescribed path to effective leadership.

Read the full recap →

LATAM Unlocked: Your Gateway to Emerging Markets



IAICC

WHAT WE OFFER

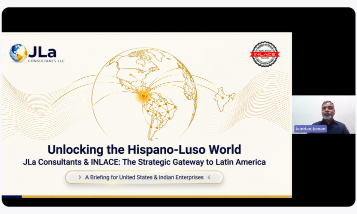
INDIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Washington, DC

ACCESS TO KEY RESOURCES 01
Helping businesses navigate complex markets, understand regulatory environments, and find growth opportunities.

COLLABORATION 02
Connecting professionals, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders to foster partnerships and shared success.

EDUCATION 03
AI Workforce Training, mentoring sessions, leadership forums, and educational FORUMS designed to support innovation and expansion.

IAICC / LATAM UNLOCKED:YOUR GATEWAY TO EMERGING MARKET



JLa CONSULTANTS LLC

INLACE

Unlocking the Hispano-Luso World

JLa Consultants & INLACE: The Strategic Gateway to Latin America

A Briefing for United States & Indian Enterprises

IAICC's virtual LATAM Unlocked: Your Gateway to Emerging Markets event on August 20, 2026, explored market entry, investment opportunities, and partnerships across Latin America. Keynote speaker Mr. Kundan Kanan, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of INLACE, representing JLA Consultants LLC & INLACE, shared his experience in cross-border business development, with Mr. Prasad Tirumala facilitating the discussion.

Mr. Kanan highlighted Panama's logistics networks, financial ecosystem, trade zones, and connectivity as advantages for regional expansion. He also emphasized that Latin America comprises distinct markets, each requiring an understanding of local business culture, trusted relationships, and a strategy suited to that country.

Opportunities across IT services, digital transformation, pharmaceuticals, logistics, and other sectors gave members a broader view of the region. The central takeaway was to pair growth ambitions with local knowledge and regional partnerships. For U.S. and Indian businesses, those relationships can help address market entry, talent availability, and execution challenges.

Read the full recap →

Future-Ready Workforce in the AI Era: Leadership Strategies for Building Sector-Specific Skills

INTELLIGENT OFFICE

On September 29, 2026, Future-Ready Workforce in the AI Era: Leadership Strategies for Building Sector-Specific Skills brought leaders together in Vienna, Virginia, to examine how organizations can prepare their people for AI-driven change.

Panelists Mr. Atul Mathur, Principal & CIO at Credence; Mr. Richard Jacik, Chief Technology Officer at the American Institutes for Research; and Dr. Gurdip Singh, Divisional Dean of the School of Computing at George Mason University, explored workforce transformation, reskilling and upskilling, and sector-specific capabilities. Dr. Srinivas Kankanahalli, Co-founder & CTO of ClearAvenue LLC and an IAICC Charter Member, moderated the discussion.

Their perspectives connected human–AI collaboration with the domain knowledge employees bring to their work. For members leading teams, the takeaway was to make workforce readiness part of business planning: identify the capabilities the sector needs, strengthen employees' skills, and equip people to use emerging tools effectively.

AI EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE INITIATIVE

IAICC Launched the AI Executive in Residence Initiative

This quarter, the IAICC Technology Council launched the AI Executive in Residence Program to help experienced technology leaders build applied AI capabilities while contributing senior guidance to IAICC-supported projects. Its inaugural cohort includes:

- **Mr. Naresh Durvasula**, Vice President, Hughes Network Systems.
- **Mr. Rakesh Dhawan**, Senior Scientist – OSS/BSS Software Development, Hughes Network Systems.

During the structured two-to-three-month volunteer residency, participants will work across technology discovery, rapid prototyping, development, productization, and knowledge transfer. They will collaborate with developers, customers, vendors, and Technology Council members, gaining practical experience with LLM frameworks, agentic workflows, and modern AI tools.

The ongoing initiative connects professional development with applied work: residents strengthen their ability to guide AI delivery, while participating projects gain mentorship and support in moving concepts toward pilot solutions.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT & WHY IT MATTERS

Small Business, Big Changes

Proposed changes to SBA size standards could affect small business status, contracting opportunities, and growth decisions. Small Business, Big Changes will examine what the proposals could mean for business owners and government contractors, including their potential implications for software and technology M&A and how organizations can prepare.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 PM EST
Conference Room, 1st Floor, 8229 Boone Blvd, Vienna, VA 22182, United States

Speakers: Ms. Shaunna Balady, Chief Executive Officer, Paragon Software Advisors; and Ms. Sharon Heaton, Chief Executive Officer, sbLiftOff.

View event details →

Beyond the Portfolio: Family Offices, Private Capital & Strategic Opportunities

Beyond the Portfolio: Family Offices, Private Capital & Strategic Opportunities will explore how private investment decisions connect with business transactions, wealth preservation, and family priorities. The discussion will cover alternative assets, investment banking, estate and legacy planning, and family governance, giving business leaders and investors a broader perspective on the decisions that shape long-term wealth.

Thursday, November 12, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 PM EST
7 Times Square, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10036, United States

Speakers: Mr. Sandeep Belani, Managing Director and Private Wealth Advisor; and Mr. Anthony Angilletta, CFP, Senior Vice President and Private Wealth Advisor.

View event details and register →

OUR MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

Loginsoft Joins IAICC as a Corporate Member

loginsoft

The value of a chamber grows with the experience its members bring into the room. IAICC welcomes **Loginsoft** as a corporate member, adding expertise in cybersecurity, IT engineering, and digital innovation to our technology community.

For business leaders, these areas increasingly connect questions of growth with the resilience of the systems that support it. Loginsoft's participation adds another perspective to those conversations. We look forward to welcoming its team into the relationships, shared learning, and exchange of ideas that bring IAICC members together.

Dr. Srinivas Kankanahalli Joins IAICC as a Charter Member

Dr. Srinivas Kankanahalli, Co-founder & CTO of ClearAvenue LLC, brings a strong interest in preparing the workforce for emerging technologies and connecting expertise across academia, industry, and government.

IAICC's focus on workforce development, including AI and machine learning education, helped motivate his decision to join. He hopes to contribute through lectures, hands-on learning, and opportunities for collaboration. We look forward to the experience and perspective he will bring to our membership community.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Sharon Heaton | Founder & CEO, sbLiftOff

Our members bring expertise, leadership, and new ideas to the industries they serve. This month, we are featuring **Ms. Sharon Heaton, Founder & CEO of sbLiftOff**, whose work supports business owners navigating mergers, acquisitions, and ownership transitions. Her firm brings specialized experience in government contracting, software, and technology to decisions about business growth and succession.

On **August 28, 2026**, sbLiftOff announced its recognition by **OrangeSlices AI as a Category Leader in M&A Advisory & Strategy**. The announcement highlighted the firm's support for founder-owned businesses across valuation, buyer identification, negotiations, and closing.

On **September 29, 2026**, sbLiftOff announced a strategic partnership with **Paragon Software Advisors** to support SaaS and IT services business owners. Combining sbLiftOff's government contracting knowledge with Paragon's technology transaction expertise, the collaboration is intended to help owners evaluate a potential sale or plan a growth strategy. Ms. Heaton described the partnership as a response to the need for specialized advisory support as owners consider their next steps.

GET WELL SOON

Wishing Mr. K. V. Kumar a Speedy Recovery

The IAICC community sends its heartfelt wishes to **Mr. K. V. Kumar, Founding Chairman Emeritus, IAICC**, as he recovers from major surgery. Mr. K. V. Kumar, please know that you are very much in our thoughts and that your IAICC family is wishing you a speedy and full recovery.

Your longstanding commitment to the Chamber has helped shape a community built on relationships, service, and shared opportunity. As we reflect on IAICC's work and look toward its future, we remain grateful for the foundation you helped establish and the spirit of collaboration you have encouraged.

We hope the days ahead bring you comfort, renewed strength, and the time you need for recovery. Beyond the events and initiatives that bring us together, it is the people in this community who matter most. You hold a special place in the IAICC family, and we send you our warmest wishes for better health and wellbeing.

WHAT IAICC IS BUILDING NEXT

AI Training Program for Workforce Development

An introductory workshop can help a professional begin using AI. Building the capability to apply it consistently in a role takes a longer learning pathway. IAICC is developing the **AI Training Program for Workforce Development** to help professionals make that next step through live, practitioner-led instruction and work relevant to their sector.

The objective is to build job-ready AI capability, with hands-on lab classes and capstone projects tied to the tools, workflows, and challenges participants encounter. The planned pathway has three levels:

- **Fundamentals** introduces core AI concepts, generative tools, prompting, and responsible use. It is designed to help professionals beginning their AI journey build confidence in everyday work.
- **Applied** develops skills in use cases, tool selection, and daily workflows. Participants would work toward an AI-enabled workflow relevant to their own role.
- **Advanced** builds deeper practitioner capability for AI-focused roles, projects, and leadership, with a portfolio-ready AI project as the intended capstone outcome.

Sector-specific learning makes the pathway relevant to different organizations. Public-sector teams could focus on service delivery, case management, and policy analysis; life sciences and health professionals on clinical, regulatory, and research operations; technology teams on development, analytics, and delivery; and nonprofits on grant writing, reporting, and outreach.

The planned paid, instructor-led model is intended to strengthen member value and support the Chamber's workforce development efforts. Its purpose is to help participants move from an interest in AI to capabilities they can apply to the work their organizations need done.

21st Century American Worker Initiative

Preparing Americans for STEM jobs in the AI era requires wider access to education and clearer routes from learning into employment. IAICC's **21st Century American Worker Initiative** addresses that challenge through a national workforce policy proposal focused on distributing federal STEM funding more broadly and connecting training with real job opportunities.

The objective is to extend opportunities across a wider network of colleges, including historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions, while developing a workforce pipeline from technicians to advanced researchers. The proposed approach brings together:

- **Research and college partnerships:** university research hubs linked with a broader network of colleges to connect research and workforce preparation.
- **Support for learners:** grants, scholarships, fellowships, and community outreach intended to widen participation in STEM education.
- **Pathways into employment:** training connected with internships, apprenticeships, and full-time opportunities in the public and private sectors.

The proposed technology focus includes applied AI, cybersecurity and quantum computing, biomanufacturing, advanced manufacturing, directed energy, and hypersonics. The policy pathway outlined by IAICC includes building bipartisan support in Congress for its proposal.

For learners, the intended benefit is broader access to education and routes into technical careers. For employers, the aim is a stronger pipeline of skilled people. This policy effort complements the Chamber's practical AI training by addressing the wider connection between education, research, and employment.

A THOUGHT TO CARRY FORWARD

> *"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."*
>
> **Mr. John F. Kennedy**

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Join IAICC
Be part of what comes next

IAICC continues to grow not just through events or initiatives, but through the strength of its community.

Every conversation, every introduction, and every shared idea contributes to something larger. A network built on trust, collaboration, and a shared vision for growth.

We look forward to continuing this journey together.

Stay connected. Stay engaged.

CONNECT WITH IAICC

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