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Nearly Half of States Have Added Good Blue-Collar Jobs That Don't Require Bachelor's Degrees, Says New Georgetown University Research

Majority of good jobs growth goes to workers with associate's degrees or some college education

(Washington, D.C., November 13) State-level analysis of the 30 million good jobs in the economy for those with less than a bachelor's degree (B.A.) finds that nearly half of states have added good blue-collar jobs that pay without bachelor's degrees. The report and companion website GoodJobsData.org from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (Georgetown Center) in partnership with JPMorgan Chase & Co. also reveal that more good jobs have been going to associate's degree holders than workers with no more than a high school diploma in nearly every state since 1991.

Good Jobs That Pay without a B.A.: A State-by-State Analysis finds that 34 states added good non-BA jobs between 1991 and 2015. Texas, Arizona, and states in the South and West experienced the fastest growth in these jobs. The report also identifies variation among good jobs gains and losses by industry and education across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Manufacturing declined in 38 states and dominated job losses in 14 of the 16 states that lost good jobs overall. Yet, 23 states gained good blue-collar jobs that pay without B.A.s in industries, such as construction and transportation.

"There are millions of good jobs in our economy for workers who have graduated from high school and completed some post-secondary education or training, said Chauncy Lennon, Head of Workforce Initiatives, JPMorgan Chase. "We need to connect this workforce with these opportunities and a good place to start is with the data that shows where these jobs are."

Nationally, a gain of 4 million good jobs in skilled-services industries, such as financial services and health services, more than offset the 2.5 million good jobs lost in manufacturing. States in the West and Upper Plains experienced the largest percentage gains in skilled-services good jobs, with especially strong growth in Arizona, Montana, Idaho, and North Dakota. Other states, primarily in the Northeast and Midwest, experienced much slower growth in skilled-service employment than the national average.

Every state experienced a shift in education requirements from high school diplomas or less to some college or associate's degrees. Associate's degree holders in Minnesota increased their share of good jobs the most in the country, expanding by 31 percentage points from 1991 to 2015. While high school graduates held more than half of the good jobs for those without B.A.s in 20 states in 1991, by 2015 that was only true in two states: Delaware and West Virginia.

"Strengthening the connection between school and work will better prepare these workers for the demands of today's new good jobs," said Anthony P. Carnevale, director of the Georgetown Center and lead author of the report.

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Differences in industry concentrations determines the size and importance of opportunities in the non-B.A. job market. For example, workers without B.A.s in Massachusetts hold only about a third of all good jobs. Non-B.A. workers in Wyoming, however, hold 62 percent of all good jobs.

Other Key Findings:

- Sixteen states plus the District of Columbia have fewer good jobs for workers without B.A.s than they had in 1991. States that were hit hard by manufacturing employment declines were likely to shed good jobs overall.
- States with the most significant blue-collar losses were New York, Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, and Illinois.
- Only two states (Massachusetts and New York) and the District of Columbia shed good jobs in both blue-collar and skilled-services industries.
- Only four states experienced a rising share of good jobs held by workers with no more than a high school diploma.

The Georgetown Center and JPMorgan Chase & Co. created this research project to investigate the impact that overarching structural economic change has had and is having on workers who do not get a B.A. The centerpiece of the collaboration is an interactive website that documents the concentration of these jobs, nationally, at the state level, by industry and occupation, and by wage. GoodJobsData.org, launched today, also explores the quality of these good jobs and the demographics of those who hold them.

To view the report and interactives, visit goodjobsdata.org.

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