

## 85% of Good Jobs Will Go to Workers with Some Form of Postsecondary Education or Training by 2031, Georgetown University Report Says

*Good jobs in the US will grow to 87.8 million by 2031, up 21% from 2021.*

(Washington, DC, July 30, 2024) Economic opportunity will increasingly favor workers with higher levels of education and training, according to a new report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) supported by JPMorganChase. While there will be good jobs on every educational pathway in 2031, only 15% will be available to workers on the high school pathway, compared to 66% on the bachelor's degree pathway and 19% on the middle-skills pathway.

*The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031* is based on CEW's projections of all jobs (*After Everything*, 2023) and forecasts the share and number of good jobs in 2031 for workers ages 25–64 by 22 occupational groups and three educational pathways (bachelor's, middle-skills, and high school). CEW defines a good job as one that pays, nationally, a minimum of \$43,000 to workers ages 25–44, a minimum of \$55,000 to workers ages 45–64, and a median of \$82,000 for all good jobs.

“We are going through a time of major economic change that carries both promise and uncertainty, including retirements of baby boomers, potential disruptions from generative AI, remaining inflationary pressures and high interest rates, geopolitical conflicts, and an unsettled national policy landscape,” said CEW Director and lead author Jeff Strohl. “The good news, though, is we foresee substantially more good jobs by 2031, spurred by greater productivity enabled by new technologies, stronger growth among high-skill/high-wage occupations, and continued political pressure on policymakers to deliver on job quality for workers, not just low unemployment.”

To help workers make decisions that maximize their likelihood of securing a good job, *The Future of Good Jobs* introduces the concept of promising occupations for workers on each educational pathway. To be considered promising, an occupational group must be forecasted to employ a greater share of workers on a given educational pathway relative to the overall economy. Additionally, the majority of jobs forecasted to be available to workers on a given educational pathway in the occupational group must be good jobs in 2031. The bachelor's degree pathway will offer 10 promising occupational groups, the middle-skills pathway will offer five, while the high school pathway will offer just one.

As demand for more education and skills increases, upskilling will continue to be evident through both increasing demand for higher-skilled workers within occupations and the faster growth of occupations that demand workers with higher levels of education. These dynamics will continue to shift opportunity to the

bachelor's degree and middle-skills pathway. By 2031, only 36% of all jobs on the high school pathway will be good compared to 79% on the bachelor's degree pathway and 52% on the middle-skills pathway.

The managerial and professional office occupations will be the largest source of good jobs in 2031—accounting for nearly a third of all good jobs—and 84% of good managerial and professional office jobs will be on the bachelor's degree pathway. Other significant sources of good jobs on the bachelor's degree pathway include these occupational groups: education, training and library; healthcare professional and technical; and computer and mathematical science.

Meanwhile, the middle-skills pathway will offer a variety of good jobs, including many in blue-collar occupational groups such as construction and extraction and production, healthcare professional and technical, and protective services occupations. The blue-collar good job opportunities on the middle-skills pathway will be bolstered in part by federal infrastructure investments of recent years.

“Several trends point to a more favorable market for middle-skills workers relative to the previous decades: slower labor force growth, fewer college graduates, federal investments in infrastructure and innovation, and generative AI capabilities, allowing businesses to hire middle-skills workers for roles that previously required more education,” said Artem Gulish, senior federal policy advisor and co-author.

In contrast, ten out of the 22 occupational groups will see net declines in good jobs on the high school pathway, even as many of these same occupations will see growth in the numbers of good jobs on the bachelor's degree and middle-skills pathways. The construction and extraction occupational group is a prime example of this upskilling dynamic. In 2021, high school-educated workers had the largest share of good jobs in the construction and extraction occupational group. However, between 2021 and 2031, construction and extraction occupations will add 893,000 net new good jobs on the middle-skills pathway, while the number of good jobs on the high school pathway in these occupations will decline by 421,000.

“While the value of college faces growing skepticism, our report affirms that the bachelor's degree pathway will be the dominant route to a good job in 2031, with a majority of good jobs forecasted to lie on the bachelor's degree pathway,” said Catherine Morris, report co-author and senior writer/editor at CEW. “While the middle-skills pathway offers new opportunities, we still see the bachelor's degree and middle-skills pathways as complements, not substitutes.”

To view the full report, including a detailed overview of promising occupations on each educational pathway, visit: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/goodjobsprojections2031>.

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The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) is a research and policy institute within Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy that studies the links between education, career qualifications, and workforce demands. For more information, visit [cew.georgetown.edu](https://cew.georgetown.edu). Follow CEW on X [@GeorgetownCEW](https://twitter.com/GeorgetownCEW), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/GeorgetownCEW), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8Wz8Bz8Bz8Bz8Bz8Bz8Bz8), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/GeorgetownCEW), and [Medium](https://www.medium.com/@GeorgetownCEW).