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16 Million Workers Find Good Jobs with Middle-Skills Preparation, Says Georgetown University Report

There are also 13 million good jobs for those with a high school diploma or less and 36 million good jobs for workers with BAs

(Washington, DC, October 16, 2018) In 1991, most good jobs did not require a BA. Today, there are three distinct pathways to good jobs: high school, middle skills, and bachelor's degree, says new research from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) in partnership with JPMorgan Chase & Co. *Three Educational Pathways to Good Jobs: High School, Middle Skills, and Bachelor's Degree* defines good jobs as ones that pay at least \$35,000, average \$56,000 for workers with less than a BA, and average \$65,000 when you include workers with a BA or higher.

"Helping people develop the skills they need to compete for today's jobs can transform lives and strengthen economies which is why we invest in research that helps us assess and provide data-driven solutions to persistent workforce challenges," said Jennie Sparandara, Head of Workforce Initiatives, JPMorgan Chase. "When we take a close look at how and where jobs are changing, we are able to address those specific challenges more directly and efficiently."

In 1991, there were 15 million good high school jobs, 12 million good middle-skills jobs, and 18 million good BA jobs. By 2016, the high school pathway decreased to 13 million good jobs, the middle-skills pathway grew to 16 million good jobs, and the BA pathway doubled to 36 million good jobs.

"While it's no surprise that the BA economy has doubled the number of good jobs it provides, it really struck us that the high school economy still provides 13 million good jobs," said Anthony P. Carnevale, director of CEW and lead author of the report. "We also found it surprising that even though blue-collar jobs declined, middle-skills jobs have grown considerably."

All of the growth of new good jobs in the non-BA economy has been in middle-skills jobs, especially among those that require an associate's degree. Most of this growth was in skilled-services industries, but there was also substantial growth in skilled-technical good jobs in blue collar industries.

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The middle-skills pathway includes workers with more education than a high school diploma, but less than a BA, including certificates, certifications, licenses, associate's degrees, and some college coursework. The middle-skills pathway encompasses 24 percent of all good jobs.

“Despite the common misconception that the middle-skills economy has hollowed out, good jobs in this sector have seen robust growth, even in the blue collar sector,” said Jeff Strohl, director of research at the CEW and co-author of the report.

The future of the high school economy remains uncertain, but it continues to provide good jobs. About 27 percent (2.9 million) of young workers ages 25-34 with no more than a high school diploma have a good job, which is down only slightly from 29 percent in 1991. Overall, the high school pathway provides 20 percent of all good jobs.

The greatest number of good jobs go to workers with a BA or higher: 36 million jobs, or 56 percent of all good jobs. In fact, 74 percent of all BA and graduate workers have good jobs compared to 38 percent of workers without a BA.

Other key findings include:

- Since 1991, good job opportunities declined by 1.8 million jobs on the high school path, grew by 3.5 million on the middle-skills path, and rose by 18.2 million on the BA path.
- Twenty percent of workers with good jobs have no more education than a high school diploma and on-the-job training.
- Between 1991 and 2016, good jobs for workers with BAs and graduate degrees doubled from 18 million to 36 million.
- More than 20 million new good jobs were created in skilled-services industries while the net number of good jobs in blue-collar industries slightly declined.
- Skilled-services industries accounted for 77 percent of good job growth for workers with middle skills.
- Blue-collar industries added 800,000 good jobs on the middle-skills pathway and 500,000 good jobs for workers with BA or higher.

Three Educational Pathways to Good Jobs: High School, Middle Skills, and Bachelor's Degree can be accessed at cew.georgetown.edu/3Pathways.

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The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce is an independent, nonprofit research and policy institute that studies the link between individual goals, education and training curricula, and career pathways. CEW is affiliated with the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy. For more information, visit: cew.georgetown.edu. Follow us on Twitter [@GeorgetownCEW](https://twitter.com/GeorgetownCEW), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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