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Center on Education and the Workforce

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NEW STUDY FINDS 29 MILLION MIDDLE-CLASS JOBS FOR WORKERS WITHOUT BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Georgetown report also details five career and technical education pathways that lead to these jobs

(Washington, D.C., September 18, 2012) – There are 29 million jobs that pay middle-class wages (between $35,000 and $75,000 annually). Nearly 40 percent pay more than $50,000 a year, according to the new study released jointly by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce and Civic Enterprises.

There are five pathways that provide career and technical training that lead to these jobs. Altogether, these Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways account for $524 billion of investment in postsecondary education and training each year.

The study examines each of these five CTE pathways in major detail:

- **Associate's degrees account for 800,000 awards each year. Half of associate's degrees are related to career-oriented fields, such as nursing, business, and information technology.**
- **Postsecondary certificates have eclipsed associate's and master's degrees as the second most common postsecondary award after the bachelor's degree—about 1 million are awarded each year.**
- **Registered apprenticeships account for $6 billion in spending and reach roughly 400,000 Americans. Nine out of 10 apprentices are men and over half of apprenticeships are in construction.**
- **Industry-based certifications such as Microsoft, Cisco, and CompTIA certifications are test-based postsecondary credentials awarded by employers and account for $25 billion of spending on human capital development.**
- **Employer-based training represents the largest pathway at $454 billion of spending—$313 in informal training and $141 billion in formal training.**

At a time when four out of five postsecondary students are working, these pathways provide students with good jobs that can pay the way to further education. The CTE system is the missing middle ground in American education and workforce preparation. Among students who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 2008, 28 percent started at a community college. Twenty-three percent of postsecondary certificate-holders go on to earn at least a two-year degree, the study finds.

The study also finds that, in the postindustrial economy, CTE jobs have shifted from blue-collar jobs to white-collar office jobs and healthcare (one-third of CTE jobs are blue collar, half are white-collar office jobs and another 15 percent are in healthcare). Despite this fact, men still hold 18 out of the 29 million middle-class jobs. For both men and women, the best jobs are in sub-baccalaureate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and healthcare, where over 80 percent of jobs pay middle-class wages.

"Compared to other advanced economies, the United States underinvests in sub-baccalaureate, career and technical education," said Anthony P. Carnevale, the Center's Director and the report's lead author.

While the U.S. ranks second internationally in the share of workers with a Bachelor's degree, it ranks 16th in sub-baccalaureate attainment. In addition, the U.S. hasn't increased its sub-baccalaureate attainment since the Baby Boom generation.

Career and Technical Education: Five Ways That Pay Along the Way to the B.A., comprises a full report and an executive summary. Both are available online at http://cew.georgetown.edu/ctefiveways.

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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. The Center is affiliated with the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. For more information, visit: http://cew.georgetown.edu. Follow us on Twitter @Cntredwrkfrce and on Facebook.

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