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## Study sees surging demand for mid-level jobs in Wisconsin

The Business Journal of Milwaukee

More than 426,000 mid-level job openings are projected for the state by 2016, according to a study by the **Workforce Alliance** and the Skills2Compete-Wisconsin campaign.

The jobs will require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree and are expected to play a role in the state's economic recovery.

The report projects that middle-skill jobs, including new jobs and replacement, would account for 46 percent of all openings between 2006 and 2016.

Funds from federal economic recovery legislation, especially the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, are also expected to create more than one million new jobs across the country -- especially in industries dominated by middle-skill occupations like construction, manufacturing and transportation.

Prior to the national recession, Wisconsin, like most states, was already experiencing shortages of middle skill workers in crucial industries. About 54 percent of all jobs are classified as middle-skill but only 46 percent of Wisconsin workers likely have the credentials to fill them.

"This is really an important time for Wisconsin to invest in training," Andrea Ray of TWA, the convening organization for the national Skills2Compete campaign, said in a statement. "If Wisconsin seeks timely economic recovery and long-term prosperity, the state must ensure that its work force has the necessary education and training to meet the labor demands of the future."

The report also assesses the current and future middle-skill employment and education patterns in the state:

- Shortages in manufacturing and health care will increase.
- In a 2007 survey of Wisconsin manufacturing CEOs, 58 percent said they were unable to find workers for skilled production jobs. And a survey of the health care work force in central Wisconsin found more than 25 percent of workers plan to retire within next 10 years.
- Middle-skill jobs expected to grow by 2016 in Wisconsin include police and sheriff's patrol officers, carpenters and registered nurses.

Tim Sullivan, CEO of the Milwaukee-based **Bucyrus International** and chair of the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment, said the report highlights his ongoing priorities.

"We've experienced shortages in skilled workers for years," Sullivan said in a statement. "While the current recession limits our ability to grow, we know that when the economy bounces back we will need a strong, skilled workforce to sustain growth and keep our company moving forward."