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Post High School Jobs Skill Training Pushed

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As Washington and the nation begin to emerge from the severe economic downturn, and businesses start hiring again, employers worry that there won't be enough so-called middle skill workers to fill expected vacancies. Spokane Public Radio's John Vlahovich reports on a statewide effort to reverse that trend.

The percentage of stable family-wage jobs requiring at least two years of skills training beyond high school is expected to grow rapidly in the coming decade.

That's the gist of a study by The Workforce Alliance, a coalition of training organizations, community colleges, union, business and government people.

Unfortunately, many of today's applicants aren't obtaining the training they'll need. Here's Eric Hahn of General Plastics based in Tacoma.

Hahn: "When we were hiring, we found only one maybe out of every 10 applicants could even pass the math test. Let's not talk about mechanical skills; let's not talk about work ethic."

Mark Matke of the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council offers one solution.

Matke: "This Council is investing several million dollars this year from the Recovery Act and other sources in training and job placement services targeting these middle skills jobs."

The Workforce Alliance study estimates that in the coming decade there will be nearly twice as many new middle skills jobs opening up as those not requiring training beyond high school.

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