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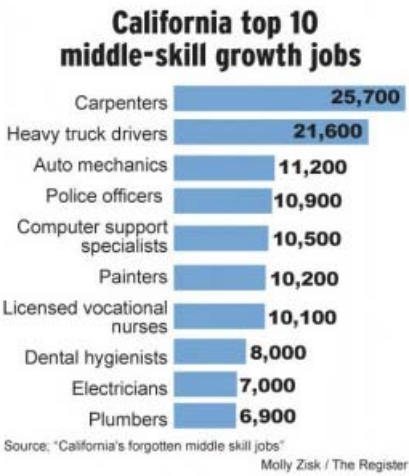
California sees demand coming for 2.7 million jobs
 October 19th, 2009, 3:00 am • 1 Comment • posted by Mary Ann Milbourn

California needs to look beyond the recession and begin training workers for jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelors degree to fill a projected 2.7 million openings, says EDGE, a coalition of groups promoting workforce development.

These so-called middle-skill jobs, such as computer technicians, carpenters, licensed vocational nurses and paralegals, provide the backbone for the economy, says the coalition in a report being released today.

Middle-skill training, however, has largely been ignored because of the state's "barbell" philosophy which has emphasized higher education and high school diplomas, says the report.

Meanwhile, these middle-skill jobs will account for 43% of the job openings between 2006 and 2016, EDGE says. The openings will come from both new jobs as well as the vacancies created as Baby Boomers retire.



These jobs are critical for the economy, but go largely unheralded, notes EDGE in its report, "California's forgotten middle-skill jobs."

"For every engineer, there's a half-dozen people who support them," says Agnes Balassa, western regional field director of The Workforce Alliance, which is leading the Skills2Compete campaign. "For every doctor, there's a slew of people working behind the scenes."

The report notes that 58% of the people who will be in the workforce in 2020 will be working adults long past high school graduation but who will still need additional education and training.

"The Skills2Compete campaign says this finding underscores the importance of investments in training and re-training the current adult workforce to closing the skill gap," says the report.

Virginia Hamilton, executive director of the California Workforce Association, which participated in the report, says efforts should also be made for workers whose jobs will never come back, like those in the mortgage industry.

She says this should include programs designed around work hours for people who can't afford to take a year or two out of the workforce to be retrained.

It is the second report in as many months to focus on the demand for new jobs that require some post-high school training, but not a bachelors degree. Last month a coalition **sounded the alarm** for more programs to train health care workers for the projected 1.3 million jobs that will be needed in Southern California alone by 2030.

The coalition acknowledges the state is broke and doesn't have a lot of resources to put into this training.

They hope their recommendations will keep state officials from further cutting funding for community colleges, which provide a lot of this training. They also hope there will be opportunities for public-private partnerships in which schools can team with employers to provide industry-specific skills.

Their goal, which they compare to the post-war G.I. Bill, is for every Californian to have access to up to two years of education or training past high school leading to a vocational credential, industry certification or an associates degree.

Hamilton says EDGE wants the report to provide a framework for workforce programs going forward, including the the \$415 million in stimulus funds that are coming to California.

Read the full report [HERE](#).