



# Arkansas

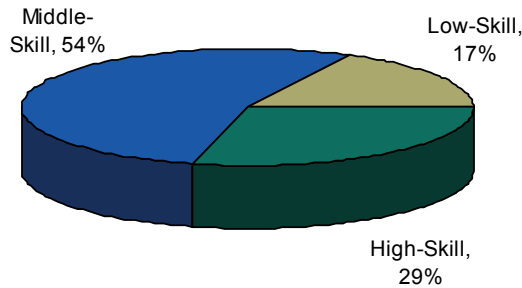
## Growing Arkansas' Economy by Investing in the Forgotten Middle

Middle-skill jobs, which require more than high-school, but less than a four-year degree, make up the largest part of America's and Arkansas' labor market. All too often, key industries in Arkansas are unable to find enough sufficiently trained workers to fill these jobs. As a result, job creation and economic growth are stifled. We can't afford that—particularly now—in Arkansas.

Years ago, our nation established a number of workforce development programs to meet this demand by preparing Arkansas' workers for middle-skill jobs. But since then, our federal education and training policies have largely forgotten about these jobs, and investments in the programs that prepare middle-skill workers have plummeted. As a result, in Arkansas too many workers struggle to find decent jobs and too many employers struggle to find skilled employees. Our federal policymakers—including Arkansas' congressional delegation—must address the investment shortfall in the forgotten middle of the labor market. Arkansas simply can't afford the lost jobs and productivity that complacency brings.

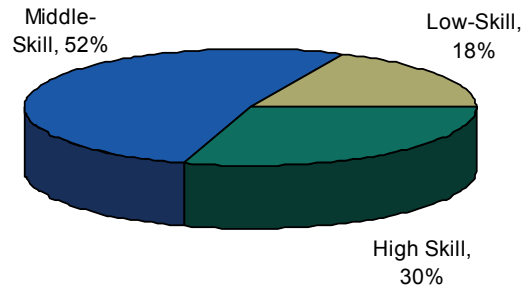
### Demand for Middle-Skill Jobs is Strong, Will Remain Strong in Arkansas

Arkansas Jobs by Skill Level, 2006



Source: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Arkansas Jobs by Skill Level, 2016



Source: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

### Middle-Skill Jobs are the Backbone of Arkansas' Economy

Middle-skill jobs are key to our nation's health, its infrastructure and its economic growth. Many of these jobs cannot be outsourced: from the care of our sick and elderly, to the repair of our computerized cars, to the running and maintenance of our factories' advanced machinery, to the construction of our nation's bridges and buildings. Middle-skill jobs can provide good wages and career paths for America's and Arkansas' workers.

| Examples of High-Demand Middle-Skill Jobs in Arkansas | Industry                             | 2006 Median Annual Earnings* |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer              | Trucking                             | \$36,600                     |
| Registered Nurses                                     | Healthcare                           | \$49,100                     |
| Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers                  | Local Government                     | \$28,400                     |
| Automotive Mechanics                                  | Installation, Maintenance and Repair | \$27,500                     |
| Carpenters  | Construction                         | \$30,100                     |

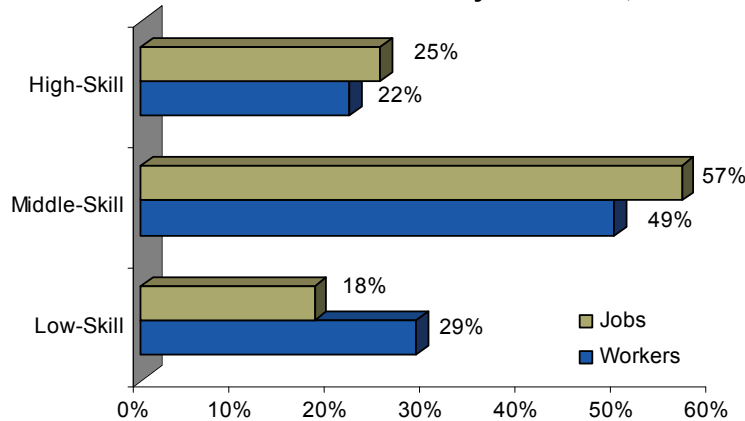
\* 2006 median annual earnings for all occupations in Arkansas = \$24,814



## Arkansas' Skills Mismatch: A Middle-Skills Gap

In 2007, about 57% of Arkansas' jobs were in middle-skill occupations. But only 49% of the state's workers likely have the appropriate training for these jobs.

**Arkansas Jobs and Workers by Skill Level, 2007**

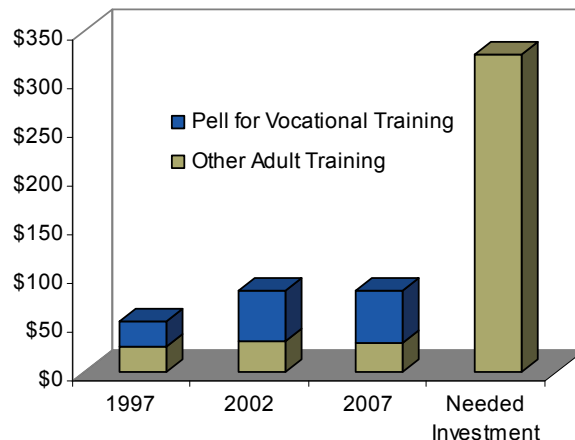


Sources: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services & US Bureau of the Census

## Arkansas' Competitiveness Requires Federal Investments in Training for Middle-Skill Jobs

To maintain a strong economy, Arkansas must address its middle-skills gap by investing in a skilled workforce. Training just another 5% of Arkansas' workforce for middle-skill jobs would require a new investment, beyond existing state and federal programs, of at least \$243 million or 2.9 times Arkansas' current federal funding for all job training, adult education, vocational education, and financial aid for community college students.

**Arkansas' Middle-Skills Investment Gap**



Sources: US Department of Labor and US Department of Education