



Colorado

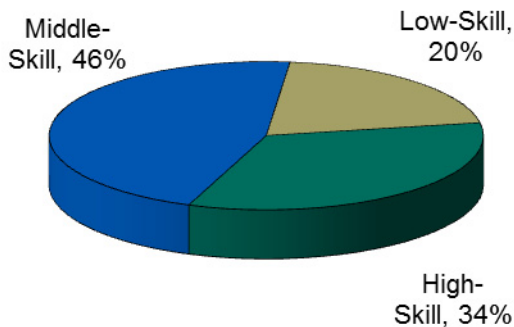
Growing Colorado’s Economy by Investing in the Forgotten Middle

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 Colorado’s labor market. All too often, key industries in Colorado 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 Colorado.

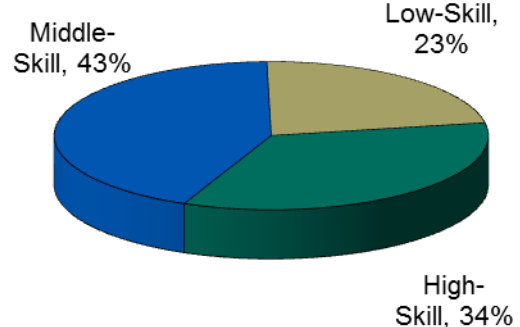
Years ago, our nation established a number of workforce development programs to meet this demand by preparing Colorado’s workers for middle-skill jobs. But since then, our federal education and training policies have largely forgotten about these jobs, and investments in the programs that prepare middle-skill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

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

Colorado Jobs by Skill Level, 2009



Colorado Jobs by Skill Level, 2019



Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Middle-Skill Jobs are the Backbone of Colorado’s 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 Colorado’s workers.

Examples of High-Demand Middle-Skill Jobs in Colorado	Industry	2009 Median Annual Earnings*
Air Traffic Controllers	Transportation	\$117,760
Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers	Protective Services	\$61,490
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	Trucking	\$39,720
Carpenters	Construction	\$39,440
Automotive Mechanics	Installation, Maintenance, Repair	\$36,360

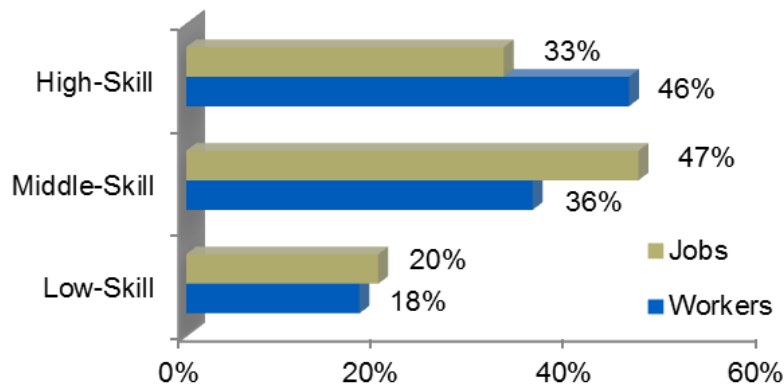
* 2009 median annual earnings for all occupations in Colorado = \$36,270



Colorado's Skills Mismatch: A Middle-Skills Gap

In 2009, about 47 percent of Colorado's jobs were in middle-skill occupations. But only 36 percent of the state's workers likely have the appropriate training for these jobs.

Colorado Jobs and Workers by Skill Level, 2009

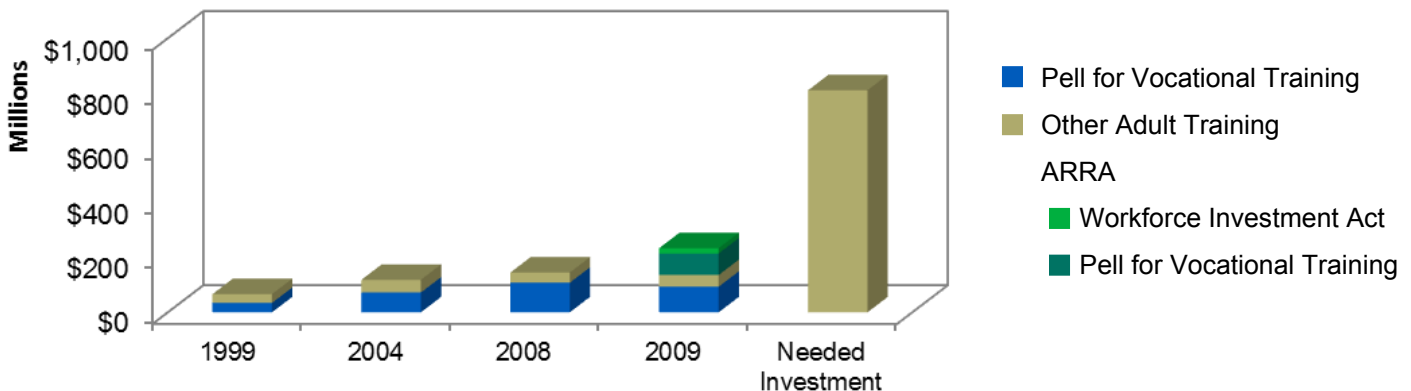


Sources: U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Bureau of the Census

Colorado's Competitiveness Requires Federal Investments in Training for Middle-Skill Jobs

To maintain a strong economy, Colorado must address its middle-skills gap by investing in a skilled workforce. Training just another 5 percent of Colorado's workforce for middle-skill jobs would require a new investment, beyond existing state and federal programs, of at least \$674 million or 6 times Colorado's current federal funding for all job training, adult education, vocational education, and financial aid for community college students.

Colorado's Middle-Skills Investment Gap



Sources: U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. Note: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds were a one-time investment in adult training programs, and include Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Pell Grant for Vocational Training funding.