



Rhode Island

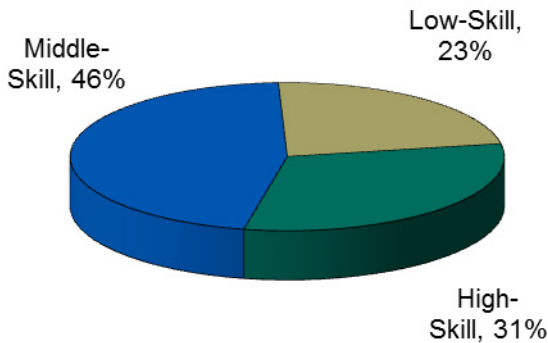
Growing Rhode Island’s Economy by Investing in the Forgotten Middle

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

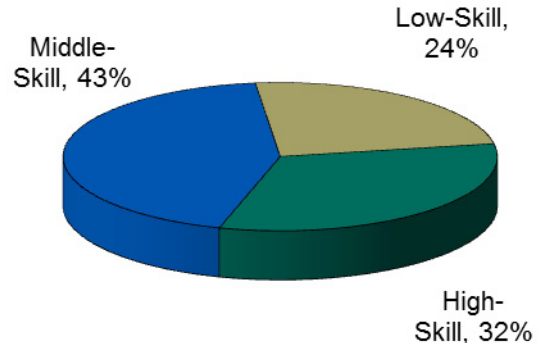
Years ago, our nation established a number of workforce development programs to meet this demand by preparing Rhode Island’s workers for middle-skill jobs. But since then, our federal education and training policies have largely forgotten about these jobs, and investments in the programs that prepare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

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

Rhode Island Jobs by Skill Level, 2008



Rhode Island Jobs by Skill Level, 2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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

Examples of High-Demand Middle-Skill Jobs in Rhode Island	Industry	2009 Median Annual Earnings*
Police and Sherriff’s Patrol Officers	Protective Services	\$52,340
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses	Healthcare	\$49,890
Civil Engineering Technicians	Engineering	\$49,430
Carpenters	Construction	\$42,480
Truck Driver, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	Trucking	\$40,410

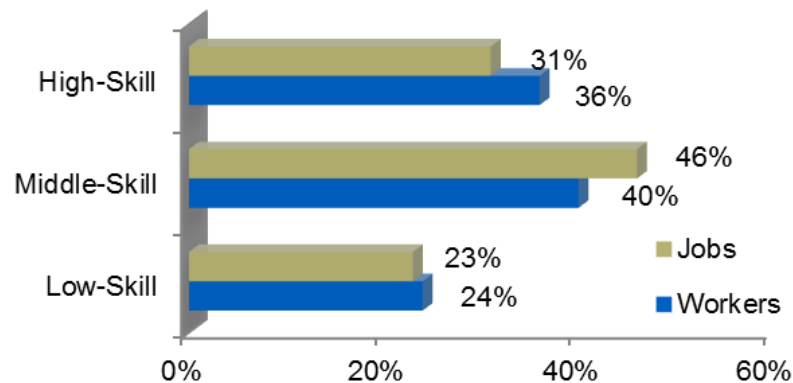
* 2009 median annual earnings for all occupations in Rhode Island = \$34,940



Rhode Island's Skills Mismatch: A Middle-Skills Gap

In 2009, about 46 percent of Rhode Island's jobs were in middle-skill occupations. But only 40 percent of the state's workers likely have the appropriate training for these jobs.

Rhode Island Jobs and Workers by Skill Level, 2009

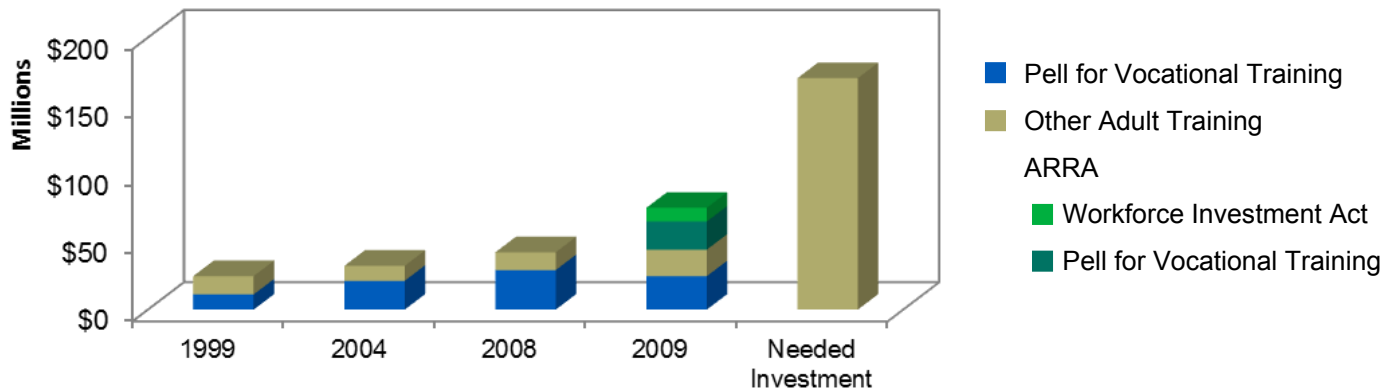


Sources: U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Bureau of the Census

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

To maintain a strong economy, Rhode Island must address its middle-skills gap by investing in a skilled workforce. Training just another 5 percent of Rhode Island's workforce for middle-skill jobs would require a new investment, beyond existing state and federal programs, of at least \$126 million or 3.9 times Rhode Island's current federal funding for all job training, adult education, vocational education, and financial aid for community college students.

Rhode Island'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.