



Largest portion of job openings projected for Indiana by 2016 in 'middle-skill' sector

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More than 487,000 "middle-skill" job openings—those that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree—are projected for the state by 2016, concludes a new study released today by National Skills Coalition in partnership with the Indiana Institute for Working Families, a program of the Indiana Community Action Association. But to unleash the full economic benefits of these openings, Indiana will need to continue to invest in proper training and education for its workforce to make sure it has people ready for those jobs.

Though the recession has halted current employment growth, the report projects that middle-skill jobs (including new jobs and replacement) would account for half of all openings between 2006 and 2016.

"The healthcare sector is growing rapidly, and demand will remain high for ready and qualified employees," said Steven Jones, Director of Recruitment and Staffing for Clarian Health Partners. "As Clarian continues to fulfill its mission across the state of Indiana, we will need more skilled workers. This past year, we hired around 2,900 employees, many for positions that do not require four-year degrees. These include jobs such as medical assistant, surgical technologist, and certified patient care assistant; entry-level positions with benefits that offer potential for job growth and provide good wages."

Despite Indiana's strong investments in post-secondary education and workforce training, preparation for middle-skill jobs has not kept up with demand. Prior to the national recession, Indiana was already experiencing shortages of middle-skill workers in crucial industries. About 55 percent of all jobs are classified as middle-skill, but only 49 percent of Indiana workers likely have the credentials to fill them. As Indiana, along with the rest of the country, moves from recession into recovery, employers will likely once again face the challenge of finding quality middle- and high-skill workers – slowing the pace of economic growth.

The report, which tracks Indiana's jobs at the middle-skill level, notes that as the economy picks up, the state will see growth in these kinds of jobs.

"If Indiana seeks timely economic recovery and long-term prosperity, the state must ensure that its workforce has the necessary education and training to meet the labor demands of the future," urges Andrea Ray of National Skills Coalition, the convening organization for the national Skills2Compete campaign. "The national recession provides a time frame for businesses and the state to be strategic, evaluate labor and skill needs, and train and prepare for the jobs that are expected to grow."

Indiana's Forgotten Middle-Skills Jobs also assesses the current and future middle-skill

employment and education patterns in the state:

- **Indiana's health care and energy sectors, two important sectors in the state's economy, show robust demand for middle-skill workers.** Occupations within the energy sector that are expected to experience job growth between 2009 and 2014 include nuclear power reactor operators, electricians, industrial machinery mechanics, pipelayers, plumbers and welders. Additionally, shortages have been found in a number of health care fields, with nurses topping the list of shortage areas.
- Middle-skill jobs expected to grow by 2018 in Indiana include dental hygienists with median annual earnings of \$65,844, police officers with median annual earnings of \$45,521, and heavy truck drivers with median annual earnings of \$37,588. The report includes a list of approximately 30 middle-skill jobs that Indiana can't live without.
- **Indiana workers face challenges when it comes to having even the basic skills.** Over one-half million working age Indiana residents do not have a high school diploma. Only about 8 percent of Indiana adults with less than a high school diploma are enrolled in adult basic education, and less than 12 percent of residents with limited English proficiency are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

The report also finds that nearly two-thirds of the people who will be in Indiana's workforce in the year 2020 were already working adults in 2005—long past the traditional high school-to-college pipeline. This finding underscores the need for Indiana to continue to target training and education to people who are working or who could be working today.

The analysis for the study was performed by National Skills Coalition using data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, American Community Survey and state labor market data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. The analysis is based on the methodology developed for the national Skills2Compete report – *America's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs* – by labor economists Harry Holzer and Robert Lerman.

Echoing a vision put forward by the national Skills2Compete campaign, President Obama first challenged every American to commit to at least one year of postsecondary education or training in February 2009, and has continued to signal that investing in a range of skills for America's workforce—"be it at a technical college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship"—will be a priority for his Administration.

Kicking off this week with a broad coalition of business, labor and education leaders, the Skills2Compete-Indiana campaign is calling on state leaders to embrace a strong vision to guide an economic and education strategy that would allow residents to meet or exceed the President's challenge: Every Indiana resident should have access to the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school—leading to a vocational credential, industry certification, associate's degree, or one's first two years of college—to be pursued at whatever point and pace makes sense for individual workers and industries. Every person must also have access to the basic skills needed to pursue such education.

"Proactive policy actions guided by the Skills2Compete vision would give Indiana a competitive edge for economic recovery and long-term growth," says Sarah Allen Downing of Indiana Institute for Working Families, a program of Indiana Community Action Association. "As Indiana looks to remain a strong competitor in the global economy, it's critical that we help prepare workers for the jobs of the future through regional sector partnerships, cross agency coordination to establish industry skill standards, employer-sponsored training programs and state-funded financial aid programs for adult students."

"We look forward to shaping legislative and policy initiatives that would better help Indiana residents to obtain higher skills and higher wages in middle- a-skill jobs and careers, encouraging family economic success," added Downing.

Whitney Smith, Program Manager of the Joyce Foundation affirms, "The report serves as a roadmap by which policymakers, industry leaders, education and workforce institutions, and other key stakeholders can forge solutions to help more people learn the right skills for the right jobs and participate in the state's economic recovery."

The state and national efforts of the Skills2Compete campaign are made possible, in part, by general support from National Skills Coalition's national funders including the Ford Foundation and Joyce Foundation.

About Skills2Compete

Skills2Compete is a non-partisan campaign to ensure the U.S. workforce has the skills needed to meet business demand, foster innovation, and grow broadly shared prosperity. The campaign's diverse and growing list of endorsers include national and local leaders from business, labor, education and training, community and civil rights groups, and the public sector. The Skills2Compete Vision: Every U.S. worker should have access to the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school—leading to a vocational credential, industry certification, or one's first two years of college—to be pursued at whatever point and pace makes sense for individual workers and industries. Every person must also have the opportunity to obtain the basic skills needed to pursue such education. For more information and to download the full report, *Indiana's Forgotten Middle Skills Jobs*, visit www.nationalskillscoalition.org/Skills2Compete and www.nationalskillscoalition.org/Indiana

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