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NEW REPORT: LARGEST PORTION OF JOB OPENINGS PROJECTED FOR MARYLAND BY 2016 ARE “MIDDLE SKILL”

Maryland’s Economic Recovery Tied to Preparing Workers for Jobs Requiring More than High School Diploma, Less Than a Four-Year Degree; Maryland Must Invest in Training Time Now To Meet Future Demand

Federal Recovery Dollars to Create Jobs in Middle-Skill Industries; Report Urges Greater Opportunities for Training Beyond High School

BALTIMORE— In what will play a major role in Maryland’s economic recovery, more than 434,000 “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 (formerly The Workforce Alliance). But to unleash the full economic benefits of these openings, Maryland will need to continue to invest in proper training and education for its workforce.

Though the recession has halted current employment growth, the report projects that middle-skill jobs (including new jobs and replacement) would account for 42 percent of all openings between 2006 and 2016.

Despite Maryland’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, Maryland was already experiencing shortages of middle-skill workers in crucial industries. About 47 percent of all jobs are classified as middle skill but only 37 percent of Maryland workers likely have the credentials to fill them. As Maryland, along 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 for the first time tracks Maryland’s jobs at the middle-skill level, notes that as the economy picks up and Recovery Act dollars continue to flow into Maryland, the state will see growth in these kinds of jobs.

“This is really an important time for Maryland to invest in training,” urges Andy Van Kleunen, Executive Director of National Skills Coalition, the convening organization for the national Skills2Compete campaign. “If Maryland 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. 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.”

Maryland’s Forgotten Middle-Skills Jobs also assesses the current and future middle-skill employment and education patterns in the state:

- **Demand in manufacturing to grow.** Recent data from the Manufacturing Steering Committee of the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board found that in 2008 manufacturing in Maryland accounted for over \$15.2 million of the state’s Gross Domestic Product, a 19 percent increase from ten years ago.

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- Middle-skill jobs expected to grow by 2016 in Maryland include **police officers with a median annual earning of \$51,310; carpenters with a median annual earning of \$39,160; and licensed practical nurses with a median annual earning of \$46,690.** The report includes a list of 30 high-demand middle-skill jobs in Maryland.
- **Maryland faces challenges when it comes to basic skill attainment.** Over 730,000 Maryland residents do not have a high school diploma or have limited English speaking ability. In 2004-2005, 36 percent of Maryland's two- and four- year college students were enrolled in remedial math, 17 percent in remedial English, and 20 percent in remedial reading.

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

Martin Knott of Knott Mechanical in Timonium, Maryland said the report highlights his ongoing priorities, "Our industry has experienced shortages of skilled workers for years. We know that when the economy bounces back the construction industry will need not just workers, but workers with particular skills and certifications to sustain growth and keep our companies moving forward."

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 Maryland Governor's Workforce Investment Board. 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.

Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley has heeded this federal call to action and is leading Maryland's Skills2Compete vision and working closely with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board to put forth a vision for the 21st century: Every Marylander will have access to the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school – leading to a career or technical 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.

"An education and training strategy guided by the Skills2Compete vision would give Maryland a competitive edge for recovery and long-term growth," says Eric M. Seleznow, Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board. "As Maryland looks to remain a strong competitor in the global economy, it's critical that we prepare workers for the jobs of the future. We look forward to developing and implementing this economic and education strategy that would allow Marylanders to obtain higher skills and higher wages in middle- and high-skill jobs and careers."

National Skills Coalition will present the report's findings today at a formal announcement from Governor O'Malley, alongside business and labor leaders, of the Skills2Compete Maryland initiative at Prince George's Community College in Largo.

The report is funded by Ford Foundation. 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 Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Charles Steward Mott Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Patrice Cromwell, Associate Director of Civic Sites and Initiatives at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, confirms the findings of the report as consistent with her experience in the foundation's efforts in the state. "Acquiring a middle skill credential in a growth industry is a basic stepping stone toward launching a career with good wages." The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a founding partner of the Baltimore Workforce Collaborative, a broad-based alliance of organizations working to improve the economic health of the Baltimore region by developing workforce partnerships that prepare city residents for skilled positions with employers who are experiencing critical workforce shortages.

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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 visit www.nationalskillscoalition.org/Skills2Compete and www.nationalskillscoalition.org/Maryland.

National Skills Coalition organizes broad-based coalitions seeking to raise the skills of America's workers across a range of industries. We advocate for public policies that invest in what works, as informed by our members' real-world expertise. And we communicate these goals to an American public seeking a vision for a strong U.S. economy that allows everyone to be part of its success. For more information, visit www.nationalskillscoalition.org.