

Study: Michigan could see 650,000 new 'middle-skill' jobs requiring post-secondary education by 2016

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A new report suggests Michigan could be poised to see a spurt of so-called "middle skills" jobs fueled by federal stimulus spending in the coming years.



The study being released Tuesday by **The Workforce Alliance** and **Skills2Compete** predicts that Michigan could see 650,000 openings by 2016 for jobs that require more than a high-school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree. The study says the state will need to continue to invest in proper workforce training and post-secondary education for its workforce to realize the job-creation figure.

"We must continue to use **No Worker Left Behind** to help tens of thousands of workers acquire the skills this report shows will be necessary for the most plentiful jobs – even as we provide employers the workforce they need to grow unhindered as Michigan diversifies," Andy Levin, who **oversees the job-training initiative**, said in a release.

The "Michigan's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs" study adds a new twist to the oft-repeated mantras linking four-year degrees and high-paying jobs and bemoaning a shortage of skilled workers. It says that middle-skill jobs could account for 46 percent of all new job openings between 2006 and 2016. Low-skilled jobs would comprise 24 percent while 30 percent would be classified as high-skilled positions.

The authors say Michigan already was experiencing shortages of middle-skill workers in key industries prior to the recession. Employers in growing green energy companies in Michigan already are having difficult times finding qualified candidates for middle-skill positions as energy auditors, lead or hazardous materials work and PV installation.

Levin and Gov. Jennifer Granholm were to discuss the results of the study during a graduation ceremony later Tuesday at mid-Michigan's Delta College. State officials helped the school set up a chemical process technician associate's degree program to **educate workers for solar energy positions** with Dow Chemical, Dow Corning, Hemlock Semiconductor and Evergreen Solar.

Among the 30 middle-skill jobs expected to grow in Michigan are heavy truck drivers, carpenters, dental hygienists. I'll post more of them when the report officially becomes available.

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