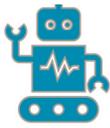


More Unprepared Than We Thought



Technology is causing shifts in the workforce: Advancements in technology are shifting roles in the workforce. Between 23 and 45 percent of current workforce activities could be automated by 2030. While these advancements will eliminate many current positions, many new ones will be created — positions that require at least a middle-skills set.



Low-skilled workers are left behind: New jobs will require more workers to have greater knowledge and higher-level skills than they needed previously. Low-skilled workers, who typically have no postsecondary education, may be stuck in low paying jobs — or may be out of work altogether. Just 54 percent of these adults were employed last year. These are the workers most vulnerable.



Workers need education and training: Low-skilled workers will need education and training to reach a middle-skills level — a point usually reached by earning at least some college credit, a vocational certificate or an associate's degree. However, enrollments in adult education programs have declined by 44 percent across the region between 2010 and 2016.



It's a multigenerational crisis: Parents' educational attainment levels greatly impact those of their children, and this is the factor most strongly correlated with skills proficiency. Adults who have a high school education or less are unlikely to be at a middle-skills level, and without more education they will stay low-skilled. It's highly likely that their children will too.



Middle-skill jobs provide opportunity: Middle-skill jobs are plentiful, and they generally pay well. A 52 percent increase is projected for these positions between 2014 and 2024. These jobs offer vital support for high-skilled positions. In 2015, 11 percent more middle-skill jobs were available than people qualified to fill them.



Adult education programs have seen improvements: Federal legislation is improving adult education programs. For example, Integrated Education and Technology courses allow students to increase their basic skills while earning a high school credential and technical certificate. Ten SREB states have also adopted the new federal College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.



There are many challenges to educating adults: Adults must overcome time and financial constraints, family obligations, transportation needs, and job responsibilities before they can attend education courses. States need to increase access for students — some with very low literacy levels — to high quality programs. And they must do so with fewer resources.



States can rely on relationships: States are now required to enhance the consistency between state and local programs and align the terminology used to meet federal education legislation requirements. Partnerships among states, their community and technical college systems, and business and industry leaders will be vital to reaching ambitious goals in adult education.

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