



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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EMPLOYERS ARE HIRING, BUT WORKERS WITH CERTAIN SKILLS ARE HARD TO FIND

Health Care, Manufacturing, Installation, Maintenance & Repair, and Protective Services Top List

OLYMPIA—Behind the good news of Washington’s declining unemployment numbers, a shortfall of workers with specific skills in key occupational fields is emerging.

In its latest annual Skill Gap Analysis, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) projects that overall demand for workers with mid-level skills will exceed in-state supply in key occupational fields such as health care, manufacturing and production, installation, maintenance and repair and protective services.

Mid-level skills are typically acquired by completing a certificate program or an associate’s degree, although this skill level more broadly includes at least one year of post-high school education but stops short of a bachelor’s degree.

“Our recent statewide Employer Survey found more than half of employers who had a hard time filling a job opening, struggled because they could not find qualified employees with vocational certificates and associate’s degrees. Now a different study that compares the number of training program completers with job demand, confirms we will have a mid-level skill gap going into the future,” said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Board.

Specifically, the Skill Gap Analysis reveals that at the present level of education and training programs, by 2017 Washington will only be preparing about

- 87 percent of the people with the mid-level training needed to work in health care ,
- 60 percent of the people needed to work in protective services,
- 60 percent of those needed in manufacturing and production, and
- 40 percent of those needed in installation, maintenance and repair.

The Skill Gap Analysis compares the number of Washington residents who completed mid-level training through apprenticeships, community and technical colleges and private career schools in a recent year to the projected number of annual net job openings in Washington that call for the same type of education and skill training. The resulting list of high-employer-demand fields of study helps guide state investments in workforce development programs and services.

For more details, see: www.wtb.wa.gov/HighDemandFields.asp

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The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of business, labor and government that monitors the performance of Washington's workforce training system and [outlines strategies for improving the system.](#)