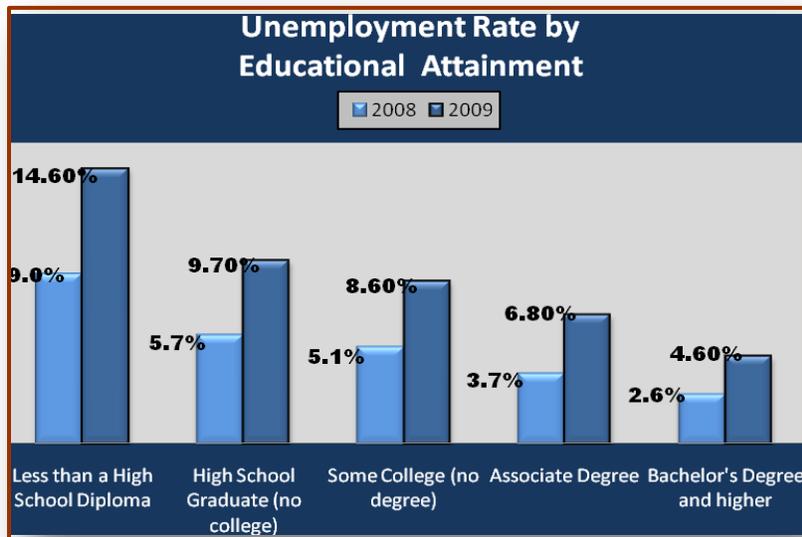


ADDRESSING THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In difficult economic times, elected officials need cost-effective approaches that improve the lives of children and families. Outlined below are effective, budget-conscious strategies to increase employment, meet the labor demands of the recovering economy and support children and families.



[Effective job training](#) and placement programs generate high returns for states by increasing local employment and families' economic security. Research shows that post-secondary education and training has kept more people competitive in this recession; workers with the least education have suffered the greatest job losses.

Looking ahead, two-thirds of the new jobs created by 2018 will require post-secondary education. Current predictions indicate that there

will be a shortage of 1 million workers with a college degree and a shortage of 3 million workers with either two- or four-year college degrees. In addition, employers will need 4.7 million workers with post-secondary certificates. People will need post-secondary education or training to find jobs to support their families and help the nation recover from the recession.

Budget-Conscious Policies That Work

- Create Career and Education Pathways that Lead to Employment.** Elected officials can direct state and local agencies to develop more effective education and career "[pathways](#)" that better align traditional basic education programs with college-credit programs and trade certification in fields that are in high demand from employers. A Texas [study](#) found that comprehensive services targeted to help people move into careers that meet specific, identified local labor market needs yielded the highest returns on state investments for both participants and taxpayers, resulting in a \$1.52 return for every \$1 invested over five years and a \$2.58 return for every \$1 spent over ten years.

[Research](#) on Washington State's Customized Job Skills Training program, which provides classroom or worksite training for new or current employees in regions with high unemployment rates to meet employers' specific needs, shows that participants earned \$864 more per quarter than a control group. Such jobs programs for high-demand skills also improve training completion rates. [Illinois](#)' "bridge" programs, which provide classes and supports to bridge the

*Data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

gap between the skills of individuals and what they need to obtain a college degree and a career, have an 80 percent completion rate compared to a national average of 50 percent for traditional adult education programs.

These successful “pathways” require partnerships among state Labor Departments, Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, K-12 education systems and private employers. Federal funds from the Workforce Investment Act ([WIA](#)), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant ([TANF](#)) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training program ([SNAP E&T](#)) can be combined to help fund job training and education focused on high-growth opportunities in the local labor market. Local businesses also can help finance job training for high-demand skills through public-private partnerships, following pioneering approaches in Kentucky, Washington state (King County/Seattle) and California (San Francisco Bay Area).

- **Establish Jobs Programs that Address Barriers to Employment.** Short-term subsidized job placements for people with severe employment barriers develop work experience, ensure workplace training and build connections to employers. Research indicates that such programs prepare people for long-term placement in unsubsidized employment.

For example, [Wisconsin](#)’s New Hope Project, which provides transitional jobs for low-income parents, generated higher earnings for parents and improved child development outcomes for their children. The [Washington](#) Community Jobs program increased the employment rate of participants by 33 percent. [New York](#)’s Center for Employment Opportunities that places ex-prisoners in transitional jobs has increased permanent employment and significantly reduced recidivism. The [Minnesota](#) Advancement Plus program improved employment rates for clients with severe barriers: for example, 48 percent of homeless participants who had been receiving welfare funds for a year before entering the program obtained unsubsidized employment, 14 percent higher than the comparison group.

Public and private dollars can support transitional jobs programs. Workforce Investment Act ([WIA](#)), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant ([TANF](#)) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training program ([SNAP E&T](#)) can all help fund these programs, and employers who accept subsidized employees can provide in-kind resources for supervision, training and job-related supplies.

Visit policyforresults.org for assistance, more information, state data, research and resources. Policyforresults.org is a non-partisan, nonprofit resource for state policymakers.