



APRIL 3, 2018

NSC calls for the modernization of the federal Pell grant program in new publication

In an economy where more than 80 percent of all jobs require education or training beyond high school and 50 percent of jobs can be classified as “middle-skill”—meaning they require more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree—the demand for high-quality, short-term credentials is greater than ever.

Despite the importance of these certificates to working people, employers, and our economy, federal financial aid programs like the Pell grant program unfairly exclude students who enroll in short-term programs. This bias really hurts career-minded people who want to quickly learn the skills that would get them a foot in the door at a local business. And, it makes it hard for business to find trained workers, slowing economic growth.

[In a new publication](#), NSC urges lawmakers to end the bias against working students and modernize our federal financial aid system so that it meets the needs of today’s students and employers.



NSC partners as a Changemaker for National Association of Workforce Boards' 2018 Forum

National Skills Coalition partnered with National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) to provide policy content, a [joint policy platform](#), and advocacy strategy to their more than 1000 attendees at the 2018 NAWB Forum on March 25-27. Rachel Unruh, NSC’s Chief of Staff, participated in a forward-looking keynote



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[Staying ahead of the robot apocalypse](#) | *Las Cruces Sun News*, 03.28.18

[German Apprenticeships: Made for America](#) | *Inside Higher Ed*, 03.27.18

[Trump Takes Another Swipe at Community Colleges](#) | *Inside Higher Ed*, 03.23.18

[Brindisi backs bid to strengthen CTE programs](#) | *Rome Sentinel*, 03.19.18

[One Year Later, Colleges Adjust to Life Under Trump](#) | *Community College Week*, 03.15.18

[Congress must support businesses, says senator](#) | *New Hampshire Union Leader*, 03.12.18

[Groups step in to coordinate high school](#)

plenary on *Forging Purposeful Change*, where Rachel offered her perspective on the future of work and the workforce, and the role advocates and policymakers must play to ensure our nation has the skills to compete. Read more about NSC's participation during the Forum [here](#).

FY 2018 omnibus released, increases funding for key workforce, education programs

Congressional leaders released final text for an omnibus [spending package](#) that is expected to finalize

Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 appropriations for most federal programs. The \$1.3 trillion omnibus reflects the increased spending levels for both defense and non-defense programs agreed to as part of recent legislation lifting the budget “caps” for federal discretionary spending, and includes some critical boosts in funding for key education and workforce development programs. Importantly, the omnibus rejects many of the proposed cuts to workforce and education programs that were included in President Trump’s FY 2018 budget request, and sends a clear signal about the bipartisan support for investments in skills as the economy grows. [Learn more.](#)

[Learn how the Omnibus spending package also provided a mixed bag of funding for workforce data in the Workforce Data Quality Campaign Blog.](#)



Maryland expands access to state financial aid for GED earners

In March, Maryland expanded access to one of the state’s largest need-based tuition grants for low income residents who have earned their GED. Senate bill 842 and House bill 781 passed unanimously in both the

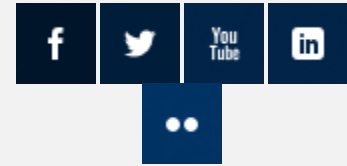


Maryland Senate and House. The bill will allow individuals who have secured their High School Diploma via the GED test with College-Ready score levels to become eligible for

03.04.18

[States Increasingly Look to Apprentices to Bolster Their Workforce](#) | *Government Technology*, 03.04.18

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the Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant, a need-based grant that provides up to 100 percent of tuition and fees for postsecondary education. On February 28th, National Skills Coalition joined Job Opportunities Task Force and other partners to expand GED testers' access to postsecondary education in Maryland. We testified at the Maryland Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs hearing in support of the Higher Education – Educational Excellence Award Eligibility – High School Diploma by Examination bill ([SB 842](#)). Learn more in the [Skills Blog](#).

Administration action on industry certified apprenticeship likely

Last summer, the President signed an [Executive Order on Expanding Apprenticeship in America](#). Since then, the Department of Labor has been at work on implementing the content of the order – [appointing](#) and convening members of a task force to develop recommendations on implementing the new “Industry Recognized Apprenticeship” system, drafting guidance and regulations on what the new system will look like, allocating \$95 million Congress appropriated to apprenticeship last year and the about \$100 million the EO directs them to spend on this initiative. [Learn more.](#)



New data shows sizeable education, workforce payoff of investing in immigrant Dreamers

[A new working paper](#) from the National Bureau of Economic Research demonstrates that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program had a significant impact on young undocumented immigrants' decisionmaking. The paper highlights increases in high school attendance and high school graduation rates, increased pursuit of postsecondary education, and greater workforce participation by those pursuing education, as well as decreased teen fertility rates. [Learn more about the study in the Skills Blog.](#)



New Indiana and Washington state fact sheets: Immigrants can help meet demand for middle-skill workers

Since 1990, immigrant populations have more than doubled in both Indiana and Washington, demonstrating the growing role that immigrant workers can play in helping the states meet the demand for middle skill workers and respond to local industries' talent needs.

Middle-Skill Credentials and Immigrant Workers: Indiana's Untapped Assets

FACT SHEET

The Indiana Economy Has Robust Demand for Middle-Skill Workers. More than half of all jobs in Indiana (52 percent) are middle-skill occupations that require more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. Yet only 44 percent of Washington workers have been educated to the middle-skill level.

Middle-Skill Credentials and Immigrant Workers: Washington's Untapped Assets

FACT SHEET

The Washington State Economy Has Robust Demand for Middle-Skill Workers. More than half of all jobs in Washington (53 percent) are middle-skill occupations that require more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. Yet only 44 percent of Washington workers have been educated to the middle-skill level.

Middle-skill positions include jobs in various occupations, professions, and personal care roles. Individuals prepare for these occupations through a variety of pathways, including career and technical education programs, apprenticeships and their work-based learning opportunities, community colleges and workforce or other private job training providers.

Demand for workers with middle-skill credentials is expected to increase in Washington State, with a projected annual job growth between 2014-2024 expected to be at the middle-skill level.

The labor market that is driving middle-skill building continues Washington's ability to meet that demand. Such a workforce is also a key asset for the state's economic development. The Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) calculates that each year of additional education leads to an increased per capita income of approximately 10 percent.

Recently, the state has set a goal to increase the percentage of its workforce with a postsecondary credential to 70 percent. The state's long-term economic development goal will help focus state policy and spending decisions on middle-skill occupations and workforce development.

Immigrants are Part of Washington's Middle-Skill Solution

Washington State is home to approximately 1,000,000 immigrants, who represent approximately 14 percent of the state's population. Immigrants in Washington are more likely to be of working age, almost 80 percent are between the ages of 18 and 64, and 16 percent are between the ages of 18 and 24. In addition, Washington immigrants have a higher higher education attainment rate, with 43 percent having a high school diploma or higher, compared to 35 percent of native-born adults.

As a result, immigrant play an essential role in the Washington labor market.

Washington Jobs and Workers by Skill Level

Skill Level	Jobs (%)	Workers (%)
High Skill (Bachelor's or higher)	25	14
Middle Skill (High school diploma or higher, but not a Bachelor's)	53	44
Low Skill (Less than high school)	22	42

Immigrants Could Contribute More if Washington Invested in Their Skills

More than half of adult immigrants in Washington hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The majority of Washington immigrants have lower levels of formal education, however. Only 20 percent have a high school diploma or equivalent, and 24 percent have not finished high school.

In addition, while a robust number of Washington immigrants are fluent in English, others are struggling. The English language skills of approximately 304,000 working-age Washington residents have limited English proficiency.

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To meet these demands, states will need to ensure that their talent-development pipelines are inclusive of the many immigrants who are poised to benefit from investments in their skills: 54 percent of adult immigrants in Indiana and 43 percent in Washington have not gone beyond high school in their education. [Read more and see the fact sheets.](#)

On the road with NSC

- On March 5, CEO Andy Van Kleunen, State Policy Network Director, Brooke DeRenzis, and Senior Policy Analyst, Katie Spiker participated in an Apprenticeship Grantee convening hosted by [The JPB Foundation](#) in New York City. At the convening, they shared ideas on how federal and state policy can support apprenticeship as a key strategy for expanding access to good jobs.
- Federal Policy Director Kermit Kaleba participated in a roundtable discussion on postsecondary career pathways with Sen. Maggie Hassan and education and business leaders on March 28th at [Nashua Community College](#) in New Hampshire.
- Director of Upskilling Policy Amanda Bergson-Shilcock and Upskilling Policy Analyst Michael Richardson presented two workshops at the [Coalition for Adult Basic Education \(COABE\) conference](#) in Phoenix, Arizona. Amanda's presentation focused on how municipal and state Offices of Immigrant Affairs can support adult ESL, and Michael's presentation shared examples of how adult educators are creatively using federal funds such as Community Development Block grants and Institute of Museum and Library Services grants.
- On February 20, WDQC Director Bryan Wilson talked

about non-degree credentials of value for a webinar on inclusive education organized by the [Association of University Centers on Disabilities](#) and [Think College](#).

- Policy Analyst Jenna Leventoff went to Denver, Colorado, to discuss Linking Higher Education and Workforce Outcomes at the [SHEEO Community of Practice](#) – Integrating Independent Institutions in State Postsecondary Data Systems convening. Jenna also spoke to Colorado education and workforce leaders about how to measure non-degree credential attainment at the “Let’s Make it Count” kickoff meeting, intended to encourage stakeholder engagement in the process of measuring non-degree credential attainment.
- On March 2, Policy Analyst Jenna Leventoff discussed WDQC’s work in helping states to measure non-degree credentials during the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) convening in Arlington, Virginia.
- On Thursday, March 1, WDQC Policy Analysts Jenna Leventoff and Christina Pena spoke to the [National Association of State Workforce Agencies](#) (NASWA) Labor Market Information Committee about enhancing data collection on unemployment insurance wage records.

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