



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION

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New Massachusetts and Missouri state fact sheets: immigrants can help meet demand for middle-skill workers

Today we're excited to announce that we have released two new fact sheets focusing on the immigrant workforce in [Massachusetts](#) and [Missouri](#). These fact sheets highlight the pivotal role that immigrant workers can play in filling middle-skill jobs.

Both states have growing immigrant populations and a high demand for middle-skill workers, along with ambitious goals for postsecondary attainment for their residents. Given these growing populations, immigrants will play a vital role in helping the states meet the demand for middle-skill workers and respond to local industries' talent needs.

Read more in our [latest blog post](#), and check out our earlier fact sheets on [Arkansas](#), [Arizona](#), [California](#), [Indiana](#), [Maryland](#), [Michigan](#), [Texas](#) and [Washington](#).

Middle-Skill Credentials and Immigrant Workers: Missouri's Untapped Assets
FACT SHEET

The Missouri Economy Has Robust Demand for Middle-Skill Workers. More than half of all jobs in Missouri are middle-skill occupations that require more than a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. Yet only 35 percent of Missouri workers have been educated to the middle-skill level.

Middle-skill professions include jobs in medical equipment manufacturing, web developers, and farming activities. Individual programs for these occupations through a variety of pathways, including career and technical education programs, apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities, community colleges and workforce or other postsecondary training providers.

Research for workers with middle-skill credentials is anticipated to increase through initiatives, with 46 percent of employers expecting to hire between 2014-2018 expected to be at the middle-skill level.

The states are clear that learning to build building an entire Massachusetts' ability to meet that demand. Success will need to come from the state's workforce development system. A report from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (OBED) indicates that 46% of postsecondary institutions report an enrollment per capita that is between 4 and 7 percent.

Massachusetts has established an ambitious goal for postsecondary attainment. By 2020, the Commonwealth aims to increase the percentage of state residents age 25 and older to 70 percent who hold either a college degree or 60 percent. This clear, rigorous postsecondary attainment goal will help focus state policy and spending decisions on middle-skill opportunities and ensure a strong workforce.

Immigrants Are Part of Massachusetts' Middle-Skill Solution
Massachusetts is home to approximately 1.2 million immigrants, who comprise approximately 27 percent of the Commonwealth's population. Roughly half of these immigrants are aged 18 to 24, which is a young age group. To expand on the age of the population to fully meet the goal of 60 percent of the population to be college graduates, by 2020, Massachusetts immigrants have a higher high school graduation rate, at 84 percent compared to 80 percent of native-born adults.

Massachusetts Jobs and Workers by Skill Level

| Skill Level | Jobs | Workers |
|-------------------|------|---------|
| High-Skill Jobs | ~35% | ~35% |
| Middle-Skill Jobs | ~55% | ~35% |
| Low-Skill Jobs | ~10% | ~30% |

As a result, immigrants are well positioned to help Massachusetts meet its goal. The report is expected to continue growing, with the share of immigrants in the state's population increasing to 34 percent from 31 percent in 2010 to 37 percent today.

However, immigrants who do not have educational attainment, education, Massachusetts workers, in order for Massachusetts to capture on the full talent pool, and address its middle-skill needs, the state will need to facilitate their skill building.

Immigrants Can't Contribute More if Massachusetts Invests in Their Skills
While immigrants are well positioned to help Massachusetts meet its goal, the state's investment in their skills is a key factor. In many states, immigrants have lower levels of formal education. In particular, 24 percent have a high school diploma or equivalent, and 17 percent have not finished high school.

In addition, while a vast number of Massachusetts immigrants are fluent in English, others are still building their English language skills.

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