

# BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR A STRONGER SOUTHERN ECONOMY

## Summary + Action Steps

“ To create a skilled and thriving southern economy, state leaders must create an inclusive workforce. ”

### TO EFFECTIVELY COMPETE IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, THE SOUTH MUST HELP ADULTS BUILD SKILLS

The majority of all jobs in the U.S. labor market require some postsecondary education or training. Southern economies, once built on low-skill industries, must now compete globally for jobs that require training beyond high school. Most of these jobs are middle-skill jobs, requiring education or training beyond high school but not a four-year college degree.

### THE ROADMAP FOR SOUTHERN SKILL BUILDING

To help states realize economic improvement, state policymakers in the South could:

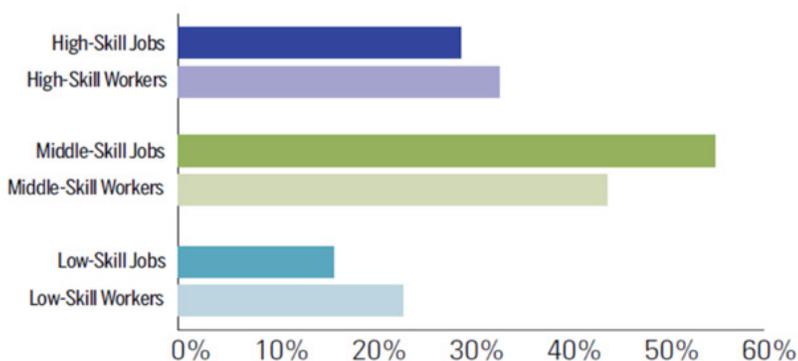
- Use workforce development strategies, such as sector partnerships and work-based learning, as economic development tools capable of meeting industry needs

- Invest in communities to implement high-quality workforce development strategies at the local level
- Establish job-driven financial aid programs that are available to a wide range of students
- Form career pathways and include comprehensive supportive services that enable completion
- Create state data systems that provide accountability on how training programs are helping residents with diverse needs get skilled jobs

State policymakers could also consider easing their path to implementation of these steps by taking the following actions, which could help bring a broad set of stakeholders to the table to unite around a common plan for skills development:

- Set a bold goal for increasing the number of adults trained for skilled jobs
- Create a cross-agency “Skills Cabinet” and task agency leaders with working together to develop and implement a strategy for meeting the state’s postsecondary attainment goal for adults

### MOST SOUTHERN JOBS ARE MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS, BUT NOT ENOUGH WORKERS ARE TRAINED TO THE MIDDLE-SKILL LEVEL



Source: NSC Analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics by State, May 2015 and American Community Survey data, 2015.

To learn more about specific policies that southern states could adopt to develop skilled workforces and fully realize the economic potential of local businesses and workers, download the full report at [www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/Files/PDFs/Community-Development/Southern\\_States\\_Report.pdf?la=en](http://www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/Files/PDFs/Community-Development/Southern_States_Report.pdf?la=en)



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of ST. LOUIS  
CENTRAL TO AMERICA'S ECONOMY®



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.