

Align the Higher Education Act with Today's Working Students

MORE THAN EIGHTY PERCENT OF JOBS require postsecondary education or training – including millions of middle-skill jobs that require more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree. Our current higher education policy ignores the majority of today's students – including working adults – and some of the most in-demand postsecondary credentials.

Congress should:

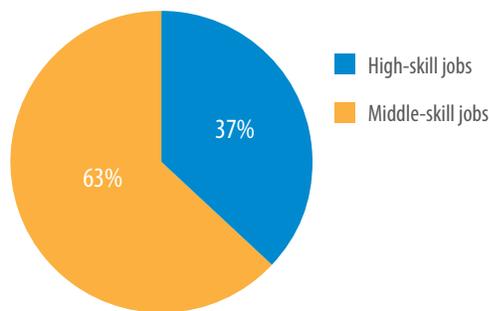
EXPAND PELL GRANTS FOR INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS. Millions of working adults seek occupational credentials at community and technical colleges to enhance career prospects, but many programs aren't eligible for financial aid. Congress should expand Pell Grants to short-term industry-recognized credentials and make it easier for working part-time students to access aid.

INVEST IN CAREER PATHWAYS. Many working students lack the literacy and numeracy skills to succeed in postsecondary education, and many more need supports like career counseling and child care to succeed. Congress should create a \$500 million Career Pathways grant for innovative strategies that help working learners obtain market-ready credentials.

MEASURE OUTCOMES TO ENSURE PROGRAM QUALITY. Investments in postsecondary education pay off for students and society, but we lack detailed data on individual programs to understand what's working – and what's not. Congress should adopt employment, earnings, and credential attainment metrics so we can measure returns on investment and support program improvements.

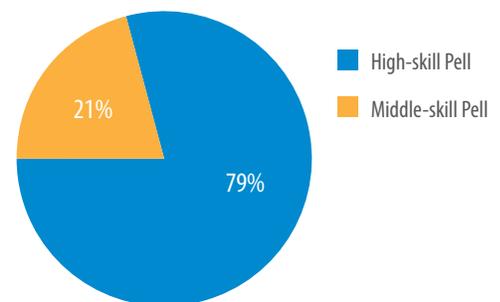
MODERNIZE PELL GRANTS TO REFLECT THE LABOR MARKET.

Total U.S. jobs requiring some form of postsecondary education and training



Source: NSC analysis

Pell Grant expenditures 2014-2015



Source: NSC analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education's Pell Year-End Report and from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS).

Middle-skill jobs make up the majority of all jobs requiring postsecondary education and training, but get only 21 percent of Pell dollars.

ACT NOW!

Make it easier for working students to get credentials sought by local businesses through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)

