

PATHWAYS TO GREAT JOBS IN WASHINGTON STATE



The job market Washington students will enter in the coming years will be full of exciting opportunities. Washington state boasts the seventh-fastest growing economy in the nation. Our anchor employers are leaders in information and communications technology, aerospace, online commerce, and precision manufacturing. Traditional stronghold sectors – such as trade, natural resources, agriculture, manufacturing, and services – provide a vibrant and diverse employment mix.

The **Washington Roundtable** partnered with **The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)** to examine Washington state's five-year jobs outlook and shine a spotlight on the jobs that will be available and the pathways Washington students can take to pursue rewarding careers.

[READ THE ENTIRE STUDY
AT WAROUNDTABLE.COM](https://www.washingtonstate.gov/roundtable)

KEY FINDINGS:

There will be 740,000 job openings in Washington in the next five years. State job growth over this period is expected to be nearly three times the national average. The majority of job opportunities—particularly those that will support upward mobility and good quality of life—will be filled with workers who have postsecondary education or training. Recognizing the need to prepare our kids for these opportunities, the Washington Roundtable has set an ambitious goal: By 2030, 70 percent of Washington students will earn a postsecondary credential by the age of 26.

THE FUTURE: DRAMATIC JOB GROWTH IN WASHINGTON STATE

Job opportunities in Washington state over the coming years will span a broad spectrum of industries, with the vast majority of positions being filled by workers who have a postsecondary credential or some college. For comparison purposes, BCG classified projected job openings into three categories based on current median salary and potential for upward mobility.

CAREER JOBS:



These jobs offer the best starting salaries and opportunities for increased compensation and responsibility. Career jobs require a higher level of skills, typically evidenced by some form of postsecondary degree, certification, or credential. More than 90 percent of workers filling these jobs will have a credential (73 percent) or some college (18 percent).

PATHWAY JOBS:



Compared to entry-level positions, these jobs offer better pay and a route to upward mobility and career jobs. Many pathway jobs require specific training or a postsecondary credential for applicants to be considered for employment. Nearly two-thirds of workers who fill pathway jobs will have a credential (34 percent) or some college (30 percent).

ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS:



These jobs offer important opportunities to gain work experience and learn basic skills. They often do not require specific training or a postsecondary credential, though nearly half of workers who fill them will have a credential (20 percent) or some college (24 percent). Entry-level jobs offer lower compensation and limited opportunities for advancement as compared to jobs in the other two categories.

THE CHALLENGE: PREPARING WASHINGTON KIDS FOR WASHINGTON JOBS

Only 31 percent of Washington high school students go on to earn a postsecondary credential by the age of 26. In a class of 81,000 high school students, more than 20,000 drop out before graduation, another 14,000 fail to enroll in a postsecondary program, and 21,000 more fail to earn a postsecondary credential. Preparing less than a third of our kids for the jobs of the future isn't good enough.

 WE NEED TO MORE THAN DOUBLE THE POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT RATE FOR WASHINGTON KIDS

TODAY'S REALITY

31%

of Washington High School Students Go on to Earn a Postsecondary Credential

OUR GOAL: BY 2030

70%

of Washington Students Earn a Postsecondary Credential By Age 26

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

IMPROVING WASHINGTON KIDS' CREDENTIAL-ATTAINMENT TO 70% WILL YIELD SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL BENEFITS

Waiting until our kids are in high school, or even middle school, is too late to start this process. The state must take a "cradle to career" approach to raising the postsecondary attainment rate and preparing our students for job opportunities in our state.

Action is required in four areas:

- **Improve school readiness**, with an emphasis on low-income children and traditionally underserved student populations.
- **Improve the performance of our K-12 system to ensure more high school students graduate career- and college-ready**, with an emphasis on raising achievement among at-risk students and low-performing schools and students.
- **Increase participation of Washington students in postsecondary education**, with a focus on delivering degrees, certificates, and other credentials in fields that will be in high demand.
- **Help students, beginning in elementary school, develop better awareness of the careers that will be available**, inspiring them to think about their futures, the skills necessary for the jobs that interest them and the pathways to attaining those skills.

Washington employers are creating exciting job opportunities that offer excellent wages and strong potential for upward mobility. These jobs should go to students from Washington whenever possible. That will only happen if we all work together to ensure more of our students attain the credentials required for success in our state.



Source: BCG Analysis.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION:



@waroundtable



@washingtonroundtable

READ THE ENTIRE STUDY AT WAROUNDTABLE.COM



520 Pike Street, Suite 1212 · Seattle, WA 98101
P: 206-623-0180 · www.waroundtable.com



THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

1918 Eighth Avenue, Suite 3270 · Seattle, WA 98101
P: 206 538 5000 · www.bcg.com