

## PRIMARY CHALLENGES TO RECOVERY

### *Inadequate Job Training*

Skills2Compete is a non-partisan campaign to ensure the U.S. workforce has the skills needed to meet on-going business demands. Their report predicts 2.7 million “middle skill” job openings for Californians in the next decade. Middle skill jobs require post-high school education but less than a bachelor’s degree.

*Skills2Compete-California Campaign. 2009. California’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs: Meeting the demands of a 21st century economy. [http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/assets/reports-/skills2compete\\_forgettenjobs\\_ca\\_2009-10.pdf](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/assets/reports-/skills2compete_forgettenjobs_ca_2009-10.pdf)*

### *Inadequate Workforce Readiness Skills*

According to research by The Conference Board, employers have identified deficits among the workforce, primarily in writing, oral communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills. Writing, in particular, is a major problem even among college graduates. The Conference Board is a not-for-profit organization that conducts research and disseminates information to help businesses strengthen their performance.

*The Conference Board, Inc. (2006). Are they really ready to work?: Employers’ perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce. <http://www.conference-board.org/publications/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=1218>*

### *Inadequate College Degrees*

California ranks 18th in sending high school graduates directly to 2-year or 4-year colleges as reported by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). New York ranks the highest and Washington is in last place. PPIC is a private operating foundation with a mission “to inform and improve public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research on major social, economic, and political issues.”

*Johnson, H. (2009). Educating California: Choices for the Future. [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_609HJR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_609HJR.pdf)*

“Tonight, I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It’s not just quitting on yourself, it’s quitting on your country; and this country needs and values the talents of every American.”

-- President Barack Obama, February 2009

# The Solution to the Barriers to California’s Economic Recovery:

## *The California Community Colleges*

What Do Key Reports Indicate?

## KEY REPORT FINDINGS

- As of 2007, 49 percent of all California jobs are middle-skill jobs but only 39 percent of the state’s workers fill them. This gap will widen dramatically in the years to come.
- Middle skill positions with the largest number of job openings include computer technicians, installation and repair workers, health care professionals, and emergency first responders.
- Positions predicted to increase by 20 percent or more are dental hygienists, respiratory therapists, emergency medical technicians and industrial machinery mechanics.
- A trained workforce in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is key to global competitiveness.
- Among California’s STEM occupations, 44 percent of the jobs are middle-skill occupations.
- By 2016 more than 75 percent of California’s workforce will require some education or training beyond high school.
- 400 employers across the U.S. completed a Workforce Readiness Report Card for each of the educational levels (High school, 2-year and 4-year) on new workforce participants’ basic and applied entry-level skills as they pertain to professionalism/work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork or collaboration and critical thinking/problem solving. The table below shows where employers reported deficiencies in key areas as related to education level.
- By 2025, 41 percent of jobs will require at least a bachelor’s degree, but only 35 percent of California adults will have college degrees .
- 1 in 4 California high school students never graduate. Latino students have an even higher dropout rate – 1 in 3.
- By 2025, adults with a high school diploma or less will outnumber jobs available for that level of education.
- Demand for higher-skilled workers, coupled with an under-educated workforce, means increased need for social services.
- Corporations searching for higher trained skilled workers will be less likely to establish firms in this state.
- 35 percent of Californians aged 55-59 are college graduates compared to only 26 percent of those aged 25-29.

*Percent of Employees Deemed Deficient in Key Areas (by Educational Level)*

Education Level	Written Communication	Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving	Oral Communication
High School	80.9	69.6	52.7
2-year	47.3	22.8	21.3
4-year	27.8	No deficit	No deficit

## THE SOLUTION: COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- » Occupational demands of the future will require skills obtained through well-funded post-secondary education and training.
- » Occupations that require only an associate’s degree or a post-secondary vocational award are actually projected to grow slightly faster than occupations requiring a bachelor’s degree or more.
- » The California Community Colleges are the largest workforce-training provider in the state.
- » The California Community Colleges provide basic skills and career technical education through credit and noncredit programs.
- » Students who received a degree or certificate from a California community college in 2000-01 saw a 61 percent increase in their wages three years after receiving a certificate or degree.
- » California’s community colleges play a significant role in workforce training efforts, producing 70 percent of all nurses and 80 percent of all California’s first responders.
- » Noncredit courses and programs in the community colleges provide a significant entry point for occupational education and training.