



KEY RELEVANT TERMS

Advanced skills jobs: jobs that require a minimum of a bachelor's degree and/or offer high wage potential.

Career pathways: pathways with demonstrated opportunities to earn higher wages through stackable credentials and degrees within a given industry sector.

Community college pathways: common pathways to attending a community college include enrolling while earning a high school diploma or equivalency, enrolling immediately after earning a high school diploma or equivalency, or enrolling after working a job and desiring to increase one's education, training, and skills. Common pathways after attending a community college include transferring to a four-year college or obtaining a job—ideally in a field that values the additional education, training, and skills that the worker has obtained.

Continued education: formalized credentials, degrees, and work-based training programs that provide movement along a career pathway.

Early skills jobs: jobs that pay wages below \$25/hour and often do not provide visible/supported pathways to wage growth through further education (e.g., stackable credentials and degrees).

Equitable academic achievement programs: programs developed by educational institutions to address observed inequities in student outcomes between students from demographic sub-groups.

Good job: drawing on the definition of “quality” jobs from Conway et al. (2021), a good job sees possesses medium to high levels of the following dimensions: agency, respect, pay, schedule, benefits, and working conditions. [1]

Living wage: “the amount of money needed for a given worker and their family to cover the cost of their minimum needs where they live, including food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other necessities like clothing and personal care items.” [2]

Middle skills jobs: jobs providing earnings of over \$25/hour at placement, with a clear mapping of opportunities for gaining promotion and wage growth through continued education.

Pathway of concern: a career pathway that lacks visible middle skills job descriptions.

Pathway of interest: a clearly mapped career pathway that links specific degrees and certifications to increasing levels of wage growth from early skills to middle skills to advanced skills, including clear targets for middle skills jobs (e.g., education and job descriptions). Bridges pathways of interest currently include IT, manufacturing, and construction.

Pathway of opportunity: a career pathway that shows potential for increasing middle skills job placements.

Transfer pathways: community college programs (credits and degrees) that have value at 4-year institutions.

Upskilling: individuals engaging in education and training to improve skills that are likely to help them succeed in the labor market. Upskilling can also be the process by which employers or other stakeholders support workers in developing new skills. [3]



[1] Conway, M., LaPrad, J., Cage, A., & Miller, S. (2021). To build back better, job quality is key. Economic Opportunities Program, The Aspen Institute. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/To-Build-Back-Better-Job-Quality-Is-the-Key.pdf>

[2] Glasmeier, A. K., & Omen, A. (2021, September 6). \$15 an hour isn't enough: U.S. workers need a living wage. Living Wage Calculator. <https://livingwage.mit.edu/articles/85-15-an-hour-isn-t-enough-u-s-workers-need-a-living-wage>

[3] Mint. (2021, February 15). What is upskilling? The better way to advance your career. Intuit Mint Life. <https://mint.intuit.com/blog/early-career/upskilling/>