

Community Solutions: Connecting Youth with Community and Careers

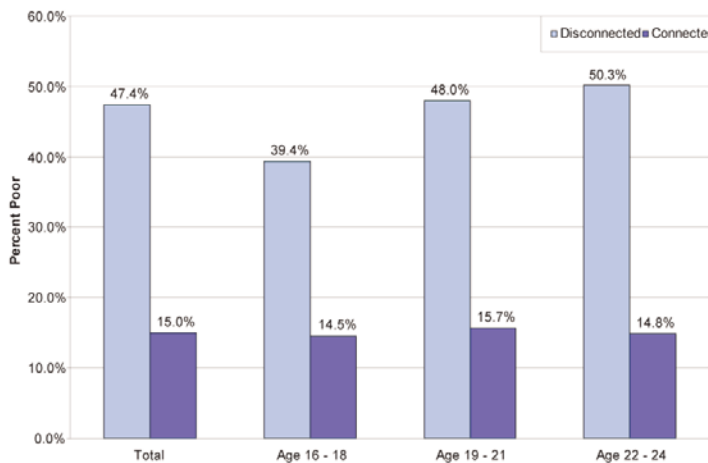
Youth face sobering challenges: intergenerational poverty, rising high school dropout rates, unprecedented unemployment. Millions are disconnected from opportunity and the supports they need for success. *The future can be different if we intentionally connect youth with their communities and careers that will provide for their families while strengthening the economy.*

Today's Reality: Youth Poverty¹

Youth who are not working or in school often lack social networks that provide assistance in employment connections, housing, and financial assistance, and may be characterized as “disconnected.” In 2009, the Congressional Research Service found disconnected youth are twice as likely to be poor and more likely to be female, minority, have fewer years of education, live apart from their parents, and have children of their own. Parents of disconnected youth are more likely than their counterparts to be unemployed and to have low educational attainment.

Poverty Status of Disconnected and Connected Youth Ages 16-24, by Age Group

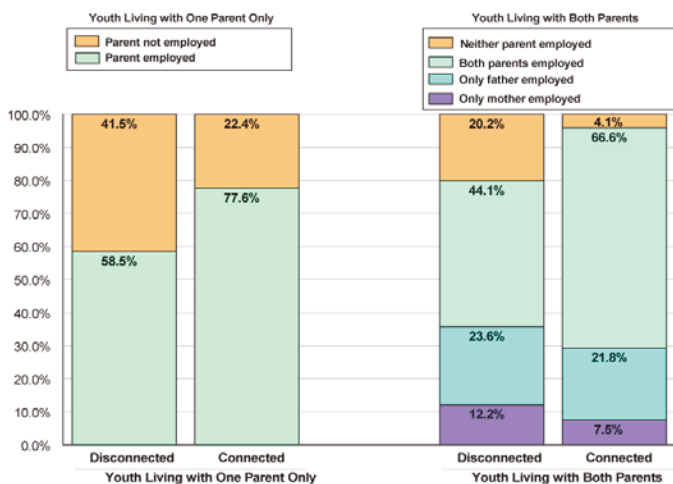
(Poverty Status Based on Family Income in 2007)



Poverty could be both a cause and consequence: growing up poor may contribute to youth being disconnected in making the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Being disconnected may contribute to youth poverty, especially youth who are no longer living at home with family members to contribute to their support. Almost half (47 percent) of all disconnected youth were poor compared to 15 percent of connected peers. While connected youth poverty rates were stable across age groups, poverty increased with age for disconnected youth. Just over 50 percent of youth age 22 through 24 were poor compared to 39 percent of youth ages 16 through 18 and 48 percent of youth ages 19 through 21.

Source: Congressional Research Service based on analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Employment Status of Disconnected and Connected Youths' Parents for Youth Ages 16-24 Living with One or Both Parents



Differences in parents' poverty and employment characteristics may contribute to disconnected youths' higher poverty rates: vulnerable youth are more likely to live in single-parent families with higher poverty rates and with parents who are less likely to have completed high school, have continued their education beyond high school, or be employed. Disconnected youth living apart from parents experienced an over 71 percent poverty rate, over two and one half times that of connected youth. Even when living with both parents, disconnected youth were three times more likely to be poor than connected youth, 13 compared to 4 percent. When living with only one parent, disconnected youth were twice as likely to be poor than their connected counterparts, 41 compared to 20 percent. When living with a parent, disconnected youth were more likely to live with only one parent (56 percent) than with both parents (44 percent), whereas connected youth were more likely to live with both parents (70 percent) than just one (30 percent).

Source: Congressional Research Service based on analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

¹ Congressional Research Service, “Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16- to 24-Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School,” April 22, 2009. <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>

Today's Reality: Youth High School Dropout Rate²

After a solid decade of improvement and despite massive national public and private efforts, high school graduation rates declined in 2006 and 2007, the most recent years for which data are available.



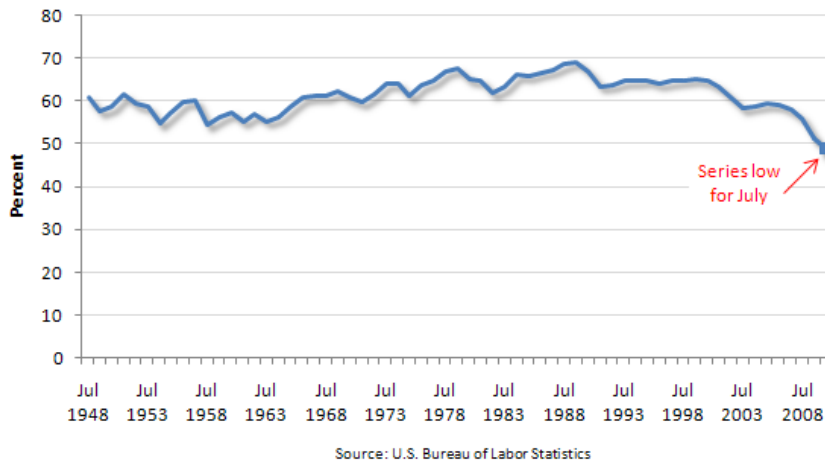
Editorial Projects in Education Research Center's latest analysis indicates the class of 2007 national graduation rate was 69 percent, down four-tenths of a percentage point the previous high school class. *Every school day, more than 7,200 U.S. students slip through the cracks of public high schools.* Three out of every ten in this year's graduating class - over 1.3 million youth - will not earn a diploma. A majority are members of historically disadvantaged minorities who are more likely to attend large urban districts in communities challenged by severe poverty and economic distress.

While more than three in four white and Asian students earn a diploma, only a little over one in two Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans graduate. Overall, only two in three male students earn a diploma; only one in two males from historically disadvantaged minority groups graduate. Six of every ten students from urban school systems' class of 2007 graduated. In districts with high levels of racial or socioeconomic segregation or high rates of poverty, graduation rates typically range from 55 to 60 percent. *There is a 42 percentage point gap between high- and low-performing states:* for the national leaders (Iowa, New Jersey, North Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin), each graduate more than 80 percent while at the opposite end of the spectrum (Nevada, New Mexico, and South Carolina), fewer than 55 percent of students finish high school.

Today's Reality: Youth Unemployment³

July is typically is the annual peak of youth employment. In July 2010, the share of young people who were employed was 49 percent, the lowest July rate on record for the series which began in 1948. The youth labor force (16 to 24 year-olds working or actively looking for work) grows sharply each year between April and July as high school and college graduates enter the labor market seeking permanent employment and other students search for summer jobs. During the summer of 2010, the available youth labor force grew by 2.4 million, or 12 percent, to a total of 22.9 million.

Employment-population ratio, 16- to 24- year-olds, July 1948-2010, not seasonally adjusted



The July 2010 labor force participation rate for all youth, the proportion of the population 16 to 24 years old working or looking for work, was 61 percent, the lowest July rate on record. The July 2010 rate was down by 2.5 percentage points from July 2009 and 17 percentage points below the peak for that month in 1989. These reductions could be related to discouragement and reluctance to enter a labor market with few opportunities.

In July 2010, 18.6 million 16 to 24 year-olds were employed. The employment-population ratio for youth (the proportion of the 16 to 24 year-old civilian noninstitutional population that was employed) was 49 percent, down 2.5 percentage points from July 2009. The ratio has dropped by about 20 percentage

points since its peak in July 1989. *July 2010 marks the first time in the history of the series that less than half of all youth 16 to 24 years old were employed in that month.* The sharp decline in recent years reflects continued weak labor market

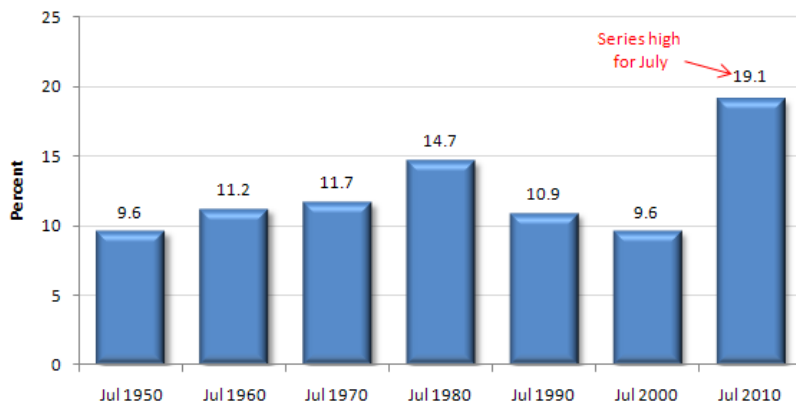
² Education Week, "Diplomas Count: 2010 Graduation by the Numbers – Putting Data to Work for Student Success," June 2, 2010.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/10/34swanson.h29.html?tkn=SYZFPGeesZNpjVFXqCaM4b2yRzBdULe%2BUb&print=1>

³ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Economic News Release: Employment and Unemployment Among Youth Summary," August 27, 2010. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/youth.nr0.htm>

conditions experienced during the recession that began in December 2007. Of the youth employed in July 2010, 25 percent worked in the leisure and hospitality sector (which includes food services), the same as a year earlier. Another 20 percent were employed in the retail trade industry, also the same proportion as a year earlier.

Unemployment rate, 16- to 24- year-olds, July 1950-2010, not seasonally adjusted



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The youth unemployment rate edged up over the year to 19 percent in July 2010, the highest July rate on record for the series which began in 1948. In recent years, higher youth unemployment reflects the weak job market. Among major demographic groups, the unemployment rates for young men (21 percent), blacks (33 percent), and Asians (22 percent) continued to trend up from a year earlier; the jobless rates for young women (18 percent), whites (16 percent), and Hispanics (22 percent) remained constant.

A Better Future for Youth is Essential – for Individuals, Families, Communities, and the Economy

As the economy inches out of the recession, much work has been done to project where the nation's growth will emerge. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce reports that, by 2018, the economy will create 47 million jobs and that:

- 30 percent will require at least a certificate or a two-year Associate's degree;
- About 33 percent will require a Bachelor's degree or better; and
- Only 36 percent, of total jobs will require workers with a high school diploma or less.⁴

While only 36 percent of the newly created jobs will be available for workers with a high school diploma or less, almost 70 percent of the U.S. population over the age of 25 lacks a post-secondary credential (48% have a high school diploma or less and 21 percent have some post-secondary education but no credential).

The same youth who are mired in poverty, disengaged from education and training, and edged out of the labor market, are the future moms, dads, taxpayers, entrepreneurs, and leaders of this country. **It will take public and private, for-profit and non-profit, collaboration to design and implement integrated initiatives that yield engaged, equipped, and empowered youth who are connected to communities and careers.**

A Better Future for Youth is Possible – Together, We Can Make a Difference

In this difficult environment, young people need support in accessing opportunity as they **prepare for work** and **transition to adulthood**. Youth need to build on their strengths, make the most of their backgrounds, and move toward individual goals. Youth need **more than a job**; their **pathway to prosperity** will include basic and postsecondary educational experiences, independent living skills, career navigation planning and mapping, volunteer and paid work experiences, and other developmental experiences.

Youth are capable of success and in charge of their futures – but they can not make this journey alone.

Individuals, organizations, and corporations are needed to invest time, talent, expertise, financial, and experiential resources to support youth development.

From CEOs for Cities website

“Imagine a community where all citizens have the opportunity to develop all of their talents and put all of their talents to full use. Where everyone is the CEO of his or her own career, and the community communicates the value of learning every day in every way? Where one's ‘portfolio of work’ is made up of multiple sources, some paid, some unpaid, that evolves and adapts throughout life to changing circumstances? What would this mean to the ability for all people to climb the economic ladder?”

http://www.ceosforcities.org/pagefiles/US_Brief_Opportunity_web.pdf

⁴ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, “Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018,” Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, June 2010. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>

To promote successful youth development, public and private entities can join forces to provide:

- **Mentoring** to match youth with caring adults to support their goals;
- **Service learning** to give youth an opportunity to give back to their community while becoming educated about critical community problems and developing leadership and work skills;
- **Job shadowing** with businesses and non-profits to learn about various occupations and meet people in their careers of choice;
- **Career fairs/days** at schools and in the community to build career awareness, professional networks, and inspire youth to aspire for more;
- **Internships** and **volunteer opportunities** in businesses and non-profits so youth can acquire key job experiences;
- **Pre-employment training** in the skills necessary to get a job and keep it;
- **Job training with stackable credentials** in the youth's field of interest;
- **One-stop career centers** to offer youth a range of services including access to computer labs for job searches, classes in career planning, summer employment, and more;
- **Hands-on training** to help young people learn skills or trades or gain experience with various job sectors while finishing high school or getting a general equivalency degree (GED);
- **High school graduation** and **GED** preparation and completion support;
- **Education tours** of colleges, universities, community colleges, and trade schools;
- **Daily living skills training** to help youth practice and hone their skills in how to live independently, such as household maintenance, meal planning, and smart shopping;
- **Financial education** to introduce or refine money management skills including banking, budgeting, saving, investing, and becoming credit savvy;
- **Family support** to help household members understand how best to advocate for and support their youth; and
- **Other supports** to help a youth achieve their goals through community resource referrals, transportation, case management services, and a host of other supports.

Life and careers are full of twists and turns, blind bends, and dead ends. Maps offer options, second (and third and fourth) chances to get where we are going - so do career and life plans. Youth and their families need tools and contacts to bridge to prosperous futures. Some foundational elements to successful program delivery include:

1. Respect for the backgrounds, cultures, and abilities of all youth and their families.
2. Engaging the whole household from a holistic, asset-based approach.
3. Assumption of ability and positive intention.
4. Community resource mapping to establish a continuum of support for youth and their families.
5. Youth engagement in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services and in leadership positions.
6. Accessible services including accessible times, locations, transportation, and language.
7. Individualized services designed with and for each youth and their household.

Public and private entities could collaboratively implement initiatives that yield *engaged, equipped, and empowered youth who are connected to communities and careers*. These initiatives could include the following elements:

Engaged Youth

1. **Who I Am, What I Want:** Holistic assessment with each youth to explore interests, learning styles, and talents; identify areas where services, resources, assistance are needed; and provide needed referrals/linkages.
2. **Dreaming:** Considering careers with transferable skills and choosing directions to explore.
3. **Career Forecast:** Information about careers, career pathways, earnings potential, education/certification requirements, and local opportunities and growth industries exploration.
4. **From Here to There:** Build career navigation competency and create career and life maps with options to map the skills, experiences, and education to get from here to there.
5. **Getting in the Game:** Equip youth with tools, resources, and contacts to support success.

Equipped Youth

1. **Step One: High School Graduation:** Understanding graduation requirements and receiving support to graduate.
2. **Seeing is Believing:** Talks and visits with professionals in a wide array of career options through mentoring, at career days, in informational interviews, on site visits, and while job shadowing.
3. **It Takes a Village:** Tap the local continuum of care for youth and their families to ensure needed resources are accessed.
4. **Putting It Together:** How to secure resources for post-secondary training or college (Job Corps, vocational training, community college, apprenticeship, college, university).
5. **Financial Fitness:** Practice and implement financial capability-building activities like banking, credit management, budgeting, saving, and asset development.
6. **Building a Network of Support:** Engage in peer-to-peer support networks.

Empowered Youth

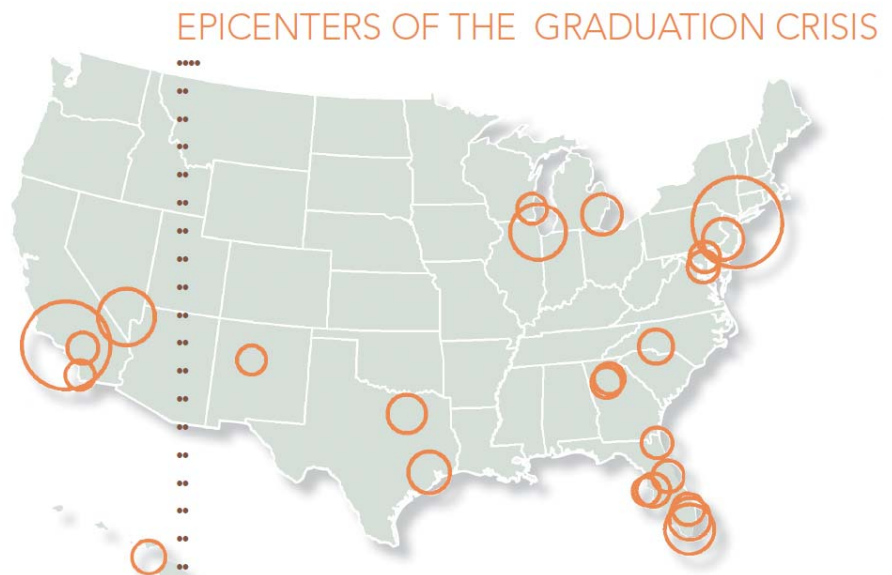
1. **Making Connections:** Link classroom activities to career goals with project-based learning.
2. **Academic and Technology Training:** Strengthen reading, math and technology skills as needed to access post-secondary opportunities and be competitive in the world of work.
3. **Best Foot Forward:** How to self advocate and be a teen's best supporter.
4. **Secrets to Success at Work:** Teach youth to conduct a job search, complete applications, develop resumes, practice interview skills, and understand workplace expectations. Provide opportunities to develop interpersonal and problem solving skills and offer guidance on networking.
5. **We are HERE:** At least quarterly parent and youth plan reviews and progress checks of school attendance, grades, and other plan elements.
6. **Service learning** activities to acquire knowledge of community problems, gain experience, develop leadership, and to give back to the community
7. **Leadership projects** on councils, boards, committees, teams, and in opportunities to involve youth in the identification/design/administration of activities/programs/services.
8. **Job shadowing** in public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations.
9. **Internships** in public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations.
10. **Transitional employment**, paid work study and summer experiences in public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations.

Connecting Youth to Community and Careers: Where to Begin

An enormous and imperative task challenges us; this nation's youth need us now. The following are means by which we might focus our efforts:

Improve Graduation Rates⁵

While 11,000 school systems enroll students at the secondary level, a mere 25 districts account for one in every five nongraduates for the entire nation, more than a quarter-million students who failed to graduate. Those dropout epicenters include both traditional big-city districts and large county-wide school systems. The EPE Research Center also analyzed school systems that exceeded graduation rate expectations by outperforming other districts with similar profiles. The report identifies outstanding performance in 21 "overachieving" big-city school systems in some of the nation's most at-risk communities: their 2007 graduation rates were ten percentage points higher than expected based on their circumstances.



Learning key high performance practices from the effective schools systems and applying them in the 25 systems that are the source of 20 percent of the nongraduates could yield substantial results and appreciably move the needle on graduation for the United States as a whole: *cutting the dropout rate by half in just the 25 leading centers of the crisis would yield 128,000 additional graduates and raise the nationwide graduation rate by more than 3 percentage points.*

Increase Volunteer and Leadership Development Opportunities⁶

Youth need experience, paid or unpaid, to help them overcome the effects of unemployment. Long after recession ends, young people initially could not find a job often suffer consequences: lack of work experience makes young workers less competitive for future job opportunities. Lifetime earnings diminish two to three percent with each missed year of work. A study of college students who graduated during the 1982 recession found that they were still earning less 8-10 years later than students who had graduated into a strong economy.

⁵ Education Week, "Diplomas Count: 2010 Graduation by the Numbers – Putting Data to Work for Student Success," June 2, 2010.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/10/34swanson.h29.html?tkn=SYZFPGeesZNpjVFXqCaM4b2yRzBdULke%2BUb&print=1>

⁶ Center for American Progress, "National Service and Youth Unemployment: Strategies for Job Creation Amid Economic Recovery," November 16, 2009. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/11/national_service.html

While many nonprofit organizations are often struggling with the effects of cash-strapped state and local government budget shortfalls, declining foundation funds, and a dip in individual charitable giving, they are experiencing a sharp increase in demand for services. Volunteerism and national service can play a role in addressing these disparities. These prepare young adults for long-term employment opportunities in the public and private sector while fostering civic engagement, responsibility, and leadership.

National service programs create full-time positions that are in most cases jointly funded by public and private resources. These entry-level public service positions provide living allowance, health-care benefits, needed child-care benefits, and the opportunity for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards which help recipients pay for higher education, educational training, or student loans. Though not designed as long-term career positions, national service jobs boost job creation by providing opportunities for difficult-to-employ youth and recent college graduates while building nonprofit organizations' capacity.

Increase Paid Internship and Employment Opportunities

Connecting learning to earning is a key motivator for youth. Youth need to know:

- That a career is possible for them.
- How the daily educational experience is linked to their career interest.
- How to build relationships and conduct themselves in a business environment.
- What is needed to succeed in business.

Whether it is engaging in hosting career awareness activities, designing training that prepares youth for jobs that are immediately available, mentoring and engaging with youth to build their networks and professional communication skills, or creating internships that provide hands-on resume-building experience, business leaders can engage and equip youth to empower themselves.

Analysis project where the jobs will be created and what educational levels will be required (see next page)⁷; youth need to know how to get from where they are to where they want to be. School systems, non-profit community-based organizations, community colleges, and university systems can work with business to build career navigation bridges so youth do not fall between the transition cracks from school to work.

Bottom Line: We Can Do This – And We Must Succeed

The future of this country depends on today's youth succeeding in connecting with communities and careers. As today's leaders, we are responsible for engaging and equipping youth so they can empower themselves to provide for their families, lead their communities, and strengthening the economy. The tables on the following page demonstrate projected occupation and industry opportunities youth will have in 2018. Together, we can prepare youth to strengthen local economies as they provide for themselves and their families.

⁷ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018," Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, June 2010. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>

Educational distribution of total jobs (by occupation) in 2018

Source: Center on Education and the Workforce forecast of educational demand through 2018

OCCUPATIONS:	High school dropouts	High school graduates	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree or better	TOTAL
Healthcare Support	316,220	1,650,170	1,316,377	1,015,012	433,370	95,088	4,826,237
Community Services and Arts	41,044	411,231	583,516	526,375	2,520,524	1,126,326	5,209,016
STEM	27,717	729,443	865,555	1,054,172	3,614,642	2,261,768	8,553,297
Healthcare Professional and Technical	-	450,038	610,671	2,161,139	2,924,180	2,667,125	8,813,153
Education	60,302	654,477	825,721	674,515	3,906,200	4,112,993	10,234,208
Managerial and Professional Office	253,580	2,033,003	2,340,385	1,766,664	7,518,784	3,771,595	17,684,011
Food and Personal Services	5,311,606	10,375,799	5,176,370	2,953,944	3,705,516	472,328	27,995,563
Blue Collar	7,122,598	15,322,808	5,805,475	3,664,944	2,387,683	337,899	34,641,407
Sales and Office Support	2,326,477	12,838,226	10,908,550	5,901,593	10,069,661	1,498,611	43,543,118
TOTAL*	15,459,544	44,465,195	28,432,620	19,718,358	37,080,560	16,343,733	161,500,010

Educational distribution of total jobs (by industry) in 2018

Source: Center on Education and the Workforce forecast of educational demand through 2018

INDUSTRIES:	High school dropouts	High school graduates	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree or better	TOTAL
Wholesale and Retail Trade Services	2,054,180	7,747,315	5,240,566	2,628,735	5,384,497	1,089,876	24,145,169
Professional and Business Services	1,172,360	3,181,083	2,995,082	2,264,671	8,649,452	4,795,087	23,057,735
Government and Public Education Services	347,226	3,465,799	4,127,209	3,909,128	7,246,199	2,764,115	21,859,676
Healthcare Services	991,378	4,124,082	3,519,395	3,936,313	5,116,397	2,866,496	20,554,061
Leisure and Hospitality Services	4,029,596	4,635,877	2,937,440	1,351,427	2,690,571	509,823	16,154,733
Manufacturing	1,262,440	4,646,339	1,984,204	1,458,667	2,612,356	1,116,125	13,080,131
Financial Services	217,869	1,780,750	2,220,391	1,177,103	4,506,022	1,441,828	11,343,964
Construction	1,809,463	3,554,175	1,387,382	878,205	837,183	162,861	8,629,269
Transportation and Utilities Services	553,317	2,871,578	1,262,668	768,033	1,049,958	181,151	6,686,704
Personal Services	970,426	2,065,142	1,064,372	914,406	750,046	447,987	6,212,379
Private Education Services	40,041	432,463	366,395	263,122	1,141,766	1,237,942	3,481,728
Information Services	-	291,555	736,215	381,689	1,547,880	503,713	3,461,051
Natural Resources	817,562	1,158,793	281,276	257,506	275,567	92,117	2,882,822
TOTAL*	14,265,858	39,954,951	28,122,595	20,189,005	41,807,893	17,209,121	161,549,423

*The education totals for education categories do not match totally between occupation and industry due to methodological differences. A discussion of the methodology used to generate all forecasts in this document is available at the Center's website at cew.georgetown.edu.