

Don't Have a BA?

Check out these top five growing industries for those without a bachelor's degree.

By Anthony P. Carnevale

You might think that a bachelor's degree is the only pathway to a well-paying job, but this is not the full story. Yes, it is true that workers with a BA have access to a larger array of jobs than those without one, but it is also true that a surprising number of jobs are available to workers with less than a BA. And many of these jobs have decent salaries. The catch? These jobs require higher skills and some postsecondary education and training beyond high school.



Our latest research on the non-BA job market, [Good Jobs That Pay without a BA](#), finds that there are currently 30 million good jobs for those without a bachelor's degree that have median annual earnings of \$55,000, and pay a minimum of \$35,000 per year. The nature of those jobs is changing, however. In the past, job growth was concentrated in blue-collar industries such as manufacturing and construction.

Twenty-five years ago, a machinist was a typical, good manufacturing job, paying upwards of \$44,000 per year. Today's well-paying jobs have shifted to jobs in skilled services such as computer support technicians, sales representatives, and engineering technicians.

It used to be that workers, particularly men, could step successfully into the job market armed with no more than a high school diploma. Workers with a high school diploma still have the largest share of good jobs that pay without a BA, but their share is declining: they have lost 1 million good jobs since 1992. Meanwhile, workers with an associate's degree are quickly gaining good jobs, up 3.2 million since 1992.

So, where are the good jobs? These five industries have had the most growth in good jobs since 1991.

- 1. Leisure and hospitality and personal services** - gained 1,380,000 jobs
- 2. Healthcare services** - gained 1,330,000 jobs
- 3. Financial consulting/business services** - gained 980,000 jobs
- 4. Education services** - gained 260,000 jobs
- 5. Government services** - gained 70,000 jobs

All of these jobs typically require some form of post-secondary credential, such as an associate's degree, certificate, or license.

These types of jobs will continue to demand workers going forward. While this is good news for workers with less than a BA, it's also a signal that being a lifelong learner means workers must continue to upskill throughout their careers to meet the demands of the new non-BA job market.

Visit [GoodJobsData.org](#) to explore the 30 million good jobs that pay without a BA and the demographics of those who hold them. Our interactive website features a tool that allows users to sort jobs by industry, occupation, and education at the national and state level.

Dr. Carnevale currently serves as research Professor and Director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, a position he has held since the Center was created in 2008.