



June 2021

Unlocking experience-based job progressions for millions of workers



The Rework America Alliance, a Markle Foundation initiative, is working to help millions of unemployed workers from low-wage roles move into better jobs. A unique partnership of civil rights organizations, nonprofits, private-sector employers, labor unions, educators, and others, the Alliance formed to respond to the employment crisis created by the pandemic, which brought into stark relief the inequities in the labor market. The Alliance is focused on opening opportunities for workers who have built capabilities through experience but do not have a bachelor's degree—particularly for people of color without four-year degrees, as they have been disproportionately affected by the current economic crisis.

markle.org/alliance

McKinsey & Company

McKinsey is proud to be a partner in the Rework America Alliance and contribute data-driven insights to help light a path for workers toward resilient, higher-wage jobs that have historically been out of reach for those without degrees or traditional experience. McKinsey & Company is a global management consulting firm committed to helping organizations create Change That Matters. In more than 130 cities and 65 countries, our teams help clients across the private, public, and social sectors shape bold strategies and transform the way they work, embed technology where it unlocks value, and build capabilities to sustain the change. Not just any change but Change That Matters—for their organizations, their people, and, in turn, society at large.

mckinsey.com



The National Urban League is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. The National Urban League spearheads the efforts of its 91 local affiliates through the development of programs and public-policy research and advocacy, providing direct services that impact and improve the lives of more than two million people annually nationwide. Visit nul.org and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @NatUrbanLeague.

nul.org



Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

The Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta is excited to partner on the Rework America Alliance. The Atlanta Fed serves the Sixth Federal Reserve District, which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and sections of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. As part of the nation's central banking system, the Atlanta Fed participates in setting national monetary policy, supervises numerous commercial banks, and provides a variety of financial services to depository institutions and the US government. The Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity focuses on employment policies and labor market issues that affect low- and moderate-income individuals.

atlantafed.org



The Markle Foundation challenges itself and diverse partners to deploy their varied expertise to identify solutions to critical public problems and achieve systemic change. Today, as advanced technology and automation change the very nature of work, Markle's priority is advancing solutions toward a labor market that will enable workers to move into good jobs in the digital economy. Markle formed the Rework America Alliance, drawing on experience from its workforce initiatives, Skillful and Rework America. This work follows Markle's success in collaboratively creating the policy and technology architecture that has enabled the transformation of information sharing for better decisions related to healthcare, national security, and access to the internet. For more information, visit markle.org, follow @MarkleFdn and @ReworkAmerica on Twitter, and read our book, *America's Moment*.

markle.org

Contents


2 Overview

7 How to think about experience-based job progression

12 Expanding opportunities for workers: Four insights

34 Supporting recovery: Taking action on the front lines

38 Appendix



Millions of US workers without four-year college degrees are unemployed. Novel data analytics reveal opportunities for them to attain better jobs than they had before the pandemic if there's action to build a more inclusive economy.

The United States is home to 106 million workers who have built capabilities through experience but whose talents are often unrecognized because they don't have a four-year college degree.¹ These Americans will be crucial contributors to future US economic competitiveness, and a more equitable economy requires their success. Current systems that emphasize traditional degrees and prior experience in the same field have largely failed them, keeping many from securing good jobs, defined here as higher-paying roles that could unlock economic mobility and long-term stability. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this reality truly stark. Indeed, about 5.8 million of these workers, from low- and mid-wage roles (earning less than \$42,000 annually), were unemployed as of February 2021, making up roughly 63 percent of all unemployed Americans.² And a large share of these workers—about 36 percent, or two million people—are Black and Latinx.

¹ Based on February 2021 Community Population Survey microdata on unemployment, US Census Bureau, [census.gov](https://www.census.gov).

² Ibid.

We are at a critical juncture for generating greater opportunities for these workers, experienced job seekers who should be financially rewarded for their know-how. As the United States recovers from the health and economic crises, workers need more opportunities to progress based on their experience and to gain access not only to new jobs but to good jobs that open the door to ongoing economic advancement. If these workers are able to progress, as a nation we can create a more inclusive and equitable recovery, with economic growth and innovation that many more Americans can benefit from in the coming years.

The Rework America Alliance, a Markle Foundation initiative, is a partnership of civil rights organizations, nonprofits, private-sector employers, labor organizations, and educators (see sidebar “What is the Rework America Alliance?”) formed to respond to the employment crisis created by the pandemic, which brought into stark relief the inequities in the labor market. The Alliance is committed to helping unemployed workers from low-wage jobs, particularly people of color who have been disproportionately affected, come back to work in better jobs—jobs that are viable for people based on experience rather than college degrees, are likely to be in demand, and can unlock economic advancement. These include jobs that act as gateways to further career opportunities. The Alliance has brought together the collective experience and capabilities of its partners—which represent the breadth of the labor market—to expand experience-based job progressions.

It will not be easy—workers from low-wage roles face a unique set of challenges. Going back to their prior jobs may not be an option, as a large number of the jobs lost in the pandemic are lost permanently.³ Moreover, the millions of these workers who are people of color face barriers resulting from racial discrimination, both conscious and unconscious, in the labor market.⁴

To prioritize the actions that the Alliance recommends that decision makers—including policy makers, employers, educators, and organizations that serve workers—take to support workers, we started with the facts. But we looked at the facts in novel ways. We looked at the job histories of 29 million people—more than four million of whom did not have a four-year college degree—to understand what is possible. Further, we looked at more than 800 occupations to layer in additional intelligence, such as employment growth by sector and occupation and susceptibility to automation.⁵

³ See André Dua, Kweilin Ellingrud, Michael Lazar, Ryan Luby, Sanjay Srinivasan, and Tucker Van Aken, “Achieving an inclusive US economic recovery,” February 3, 2021, McKinsey.com.

⁴ Ashley Bozarth, “Racial disparities in the labor market,” *Workforce Currents*, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, February 28, 2018, atlantafed.org. Note that racial inequities often intersect with other inequities such as those based on gender, disabilities, and other factors.

⁵ Parul Batra, Jacques Bughin, Michael Chui, Ryan Ko, Susan Lund, James Manyika, Saurabh Sanghvi, and Jonathan Woetzel, “Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages,” McKinsey Global Institute, November 28, 2017, McKinsey.com.

What is the Rework America Alliance?

The Rework America Alliance, a Markle Foundation initiative, is working to help millions of unemployed workers from low-wage roles move into better jobs. A unique partnership of civil rights organizations, nonprofits, private-sector employers, labor unions, educators, and others, the Alliance formed to respond to the employment crisis created by the pandemic, which brought into stark relief the inequities in the labor market.

The Alliance (see full list of Alliance partners on page 47) is committed to helping workers who have built capabilities through experience but do not have a bachelor's degree—particularly people of color without four-year degrees, as they have been

disproportionately affected by the economic crisis—to come back to work in better jobs. These are jobs that are viable for people based on experience rather than college degrees, are likely to be in demand, and can unlock economic advancement.

To connect people with these jobs, the Alliance is partnering with the organizations that provide critical support to job seekers in their local communities. The Alliance is providing organizations with new data, tools, partnerships, and resources that will enhance their ability to help job seekers, including insights on better jobs for low-wage workers; guidance on effective, affordable training, if needed, that prepares workers for those jobs; and

training for career coaches on providing relevant support to workers during these transitions.

The Alliance is also working with state governors and other leaders to help them make better-informed decisions on workforce issues and with employers to secure their commitments to hire candidates from nontraditional talent pools to reduce bias in hiring and increase workforce diversity.

With this work, this national initiative is bringing together the collective experience and capabilities of its broad group of partners—which represent the breadth of the labor market—to expand economic advancement for all workers.

We build on previous work by Alliance partners and others. For example, Opportunity@Work⁶ has led the charge with research that frames how to analyze job progressions and skill distance. The Brookings Institution,⁷ Burning Glass Technologies,⁸ Emsi,⁹ and the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Philadelphia,¹⁰ among others, have created useful and complementary analyses of job and skill adjacencies—which, taken together, helped identify the most salient opportunities for job seekers.

Building on this strong foundation, we have added the following important layers to identify the actions that those working to support job seekers could take:

- **Credible precedent:** What job progressions have real people from the same jobs been able to achieve in the past, with enough scale to give confidence that such progressions could be possible for millions more Americans?

⁶ *Navigating with the STARs: Reimagining equitable pathways to mobility*, Opportunity@Work, December 2020, opportunityatwork.org.

⁷ "Job mobility and smart growth toolkit: Data-driven insights to expand opportunity," Brookings Institution, 2021, brookings.edu.

⁸ *Filling the lifeboats: Getting America back to work after the pandemic*, Burning Glass Technologies, May 2020, burning-glass.com.

⁹ Emsi, economicmodeling.com.

¹⁰ Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, "New interactive tool by the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland helps workers chart pathways from lower-wage to higher-paying jobs," press release, December 14, 2020, philadelphiafed.org.

- **Value of experience:** Using the credible precedent, which job progressions have been possible specifically for people without a four-year (bachelor's) degree who were hired into good jobs based primarily on the value of their work experience?
- **A focus on good jobs:** Which experience-based job progressions have enabled the most people to attain economic mobility?
- **Near-term availability of good jobs:** Which of these job progressions will be most viable in the economic recovery after the pandemic?
- **Future growth of good jobs:** How can workers move from sectors with uncertain futures to sectors that will grow? How will automation and shifting global competition change which progressions are attractive?

What did we find? Our analysis shows that unemployed workers from low-wage jobs have acquired the experience needed to make them eligible for good, viable jobs in the near term—and that, over time, these workers can progress in their careers from good, viable jobs to full participation in the ever-changing digital economy's labor market. Moreover, in recognizing the value of experience in roles outside a sector, employers also open the door for more people of color who belong to labor pools they did not previously consider.

Our analysis shows that unemployed workers from low-wage jobs have acquired the experience needed to make them eligible for good, viable jobs in the near term.

More specifically, we can distill our findings into four insights that can support action by policy makers, employers, educators, and organizations that serve workers:

- 1. Seventy-seven hidden Gateway¹¹ occupations have proved to be springboards to economic advancement and could improve racial representation.** Action: expand availability of and access to these Gateways, and also enable workers to pursue the larger set of good, viable jobs as Gateway jobs grow in demand through the recovery.
- 2. Seventy percent of these Gateways to economic advancement depend on interpersonal skills, for which experience is particularly important.** Action: enable job seekers to recognize, and more effectively harness, their valuable interpersonal skills to make transitions to Gateways and the broader set of good, viable jobs.
- 3. Gateways and other good, viable occupations will likely account for nearly 20 percent of employment growth in the next year, but the shape the recovery will take is uncertain, and competition for these roles is likely to be intense.** Action: provide more hands-on support to job seekers as they plan their careers to help mitigate future risk and instability. In parallel, make a serious investment to expand and accelerate the growth of Gateway jobs during the economic recovery to better support a more inclusive recovery that provides more opportunities for economic mobility.
- 4. Occupations in healthcare and industrials (manufacturing and construction), alongside digital roles that cross sectors, will likely provide about 40 percent of good, viable job growth over the next 12 months. But the barriers are high.** Action: make these job progressions more accessible, helping job seekers overcome these barriers.

By acting on these insights, those who seek to expand employment opportunities and support job seekers can increase the odds of a more inclusive, racially equitable, and successful economic recovery.

¹¹For more about Gateways, see the next section, “How to think about experience-based job progression.”

How to think about experience-based job progression

For a more inclusive US economic recovery, decision makers need to support low-wage job seekers not just in finding jobs but—wherever possible—in finding good, viable jobs. **Good, viable jobs are the foundation of experience-based job progressions.**

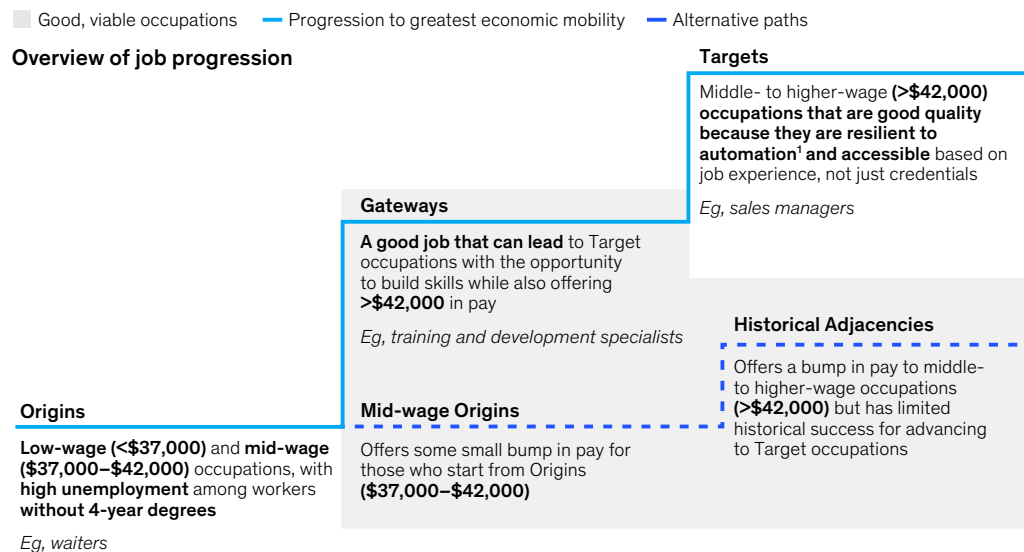
We describe experience-based job progressions using an Origin-to-Gateway-to-Target framework (Exhibit 1).¹² Origins are low-wage occupations from which workers can move into better jobs; nationally, they provide less than \$42,000 in median individual income annually for people without a four-year degree. Targets are attractive occupations in terms of risk¹³ and income, providing annual salaries of more than \$42,000, and have been relatively viable for job seekers from Origins

¹²Navigating with the STARS.

¹³Based on McKinsey Global Institute’s Future of Work research. See André Dua, Bryan Hancock, Susan Lund, Brent Macon, James Manyika, Scott Rutherford, and Liz Hilton Segel, “The future of work in America: People and places, today and tomorrow,” July 11, 2019, McKinsey.com.

Exhibit 1

One way to look at the US occupation landscape is through the lens of job progression.



¹ Based on McKinsey Global Institute’s analysis of risk of offshoring and automation (2019). Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey analysis using Emsi data; and McKinsey Global Institute

without a four-year degree. These jobs are the ultimate goal. Gateways, which are good roles in themselves, provide a springboard from Origins to Targets. They expand a job seeker's body of skills or broaden existing skills, positioning the job seeker for an attractive Target role.

For example, one job progression is from a role as a waiter (Origin) to a training and development specialist¹⁴ (Gateway) to a sales manager (Target). In some cases, job seekers may have undertaken training between jobs to help them progress; in others, they may have benefited from internal promotion. And, in still others, they may have moved directly into an attractive next job.

Given the importance of Gateways, we have applied stringent criteria to determine what qualifies as one (see sidebar "What qualifies as Gateways and Targets?"). In general, these jobs have historically provided a next step that pays more than Origin roles and opens up more opportunities for people coming from those roles.

Workers from Origins can access two types of good, viable jobs in addition to Gateways: Historical Adjacencies and mid-wage Origins. Mid-wage Origin jobs are a subset of Origin jobs that are on the higher end of the pay range and can provide a step up from a low-wage Origin position. Neither provides the same advantages as Gateways, but each one could provide meaningful economic benefits to a worker. Together, these three opportunities reflect the following hierarchy of economic mobility:

- **First and best are Gateways.** Thirty-four percent of all good, viable jobs,¹⁵ Gateway roles not only provide good wages but also are the best springboard to attractive Target occupations.
- **Next are Historical Adjacencies.** Fourteen percent of all good, viable jobs are Historical Adjacencies. Like Gateways, these jobs have been accessible to people without a four-year degree, provide good wage increases (to an annual salary of more than \$42,000 for those without a four-year degree), and can lay the groundwork for a meaningful career. However, they have not proved to unlock progressions to Targets. Predominantly in the trades, these roles include occupations such as pipe fitters and steamfitters, plumbers, and heating and air-conditioning mechanics and installers.

¹⁴Training and development specialist role description, according to O*NET Code Connector, onetcodeconnector.org: "Design or conduct work-related training and development programs to improve individual skills or organizational performance. May analyze organizational training needs or evaluate training effectiveness."

¹⁵Our analysis suggests a total of more than 200 good, viable occupations.

- **Last are mid-wage Origins.** Fifty-two percent of good, viable jobs, mid-wage Origins neither unlock job progressions, as Gateways do, nor provide salary increases as high as those of Gateways or Historical Adjacencies. But they do provide a degree of wage increase, with median annual incomes from \$37,000 to \$42,000 for people without a four-year degree, and employers are hiring more of these roles than the others. These roles include production, planning, and expediting clerks and telecommunications-equipment installers and repairers. These opportunities are especially applicable to people coming from Origin jobs related to maintenance or secretarial work—which is a large subset of unemployed individuals.

What qualifies as Gateways and Targets?

To identify progressions that are currently viable for people from low-wage jobs who are unemployed and don't have a four-year degree, we applied the following criteria for Gateways:

- For an occupation to be considered a Gateway, at least 25 percent of its employees nationally must be without a bachelor's degree (based on 2019 figures).
- The volume and percentage of transitions must be statistically

significant: at least 33 percent of those coming in to Gateways are coming from Origins, and at least 33 percent of those going out from Gateways are heading to Targets.

- A Gateway must offer an annual salary of more than \$42,000 to provide these workers an immediate raise.

Within the Origin-to-Gateway-to-Target framework, a Gateway provides an opportunity for a worker from an Origin role to eventually progress to a Target role.

We applied the following criteria for Targets:

- A Target is an occupation in which at least 10 percent of employees nationally do not have a bachelor's degree (based on 2019 figures).
- A Target must have a low long-term (five- to ten-year) risk of being eliminated by automation and offshoring.

Reassessing the opportunities for experience-based job seekers

Our analysis accounts for the economic impact of COVID-19 and focuses on experience-based job seekers in particular. This focus reveals two important differences from transition analyses done by others before the pandemic.

First, COVID-19 has eliminated some past areas of opportunity. For instance, prior research showed that certain administrative and service occupations traditionally offered attractive opportunities to job seekers without a four-year degree. Among the most common of these occupations were customer-service representatives, secretaries and administrative assistants, office clerks, and maintenance and repair workers. Before the pandemic, these occupations were accessible to a large number of job seekers based on their work experience, and these jobs provided higher incomes. Due to the pandemic, however, several of these occupations—including all those mentioned in this paragraph—now have some of the highest unemployment rates in the economy and therefore are not good opportunities for experience-based job seekers from Origins.

Second, even prior to the pandemic, these occupations offered a smaller economic boost to job seekers without a four-year degree than to those with one. For example, the job postings for sales and related workers (within the customer-services occupation family) that were agnostic to education background offered a median salary of \$45,696 per year; by contrast, for postings accepting job seekers without a four-year degree, it was \$31,104—less than the US median individual income.¹⁶ The contrast is even greater for a role such as building cleaners, for which the job postings agnostic to education background offered a median salary of \$44,928 and only \$28,032 for job seekers without a four-year degree—putting these workers well below the national median income (Exhibit 2).¹⁷

We took these realities into account when shaping this analysis of the jobs that provide progressions to economic mobility for workers from Origin occupations. The result is a realistic view of which job progressions likely matter the most today, as unemployed workers return to the workforce after the disruption of the pandemic.

¹⁶US median individual income is based on St. Louis Fed's 2019 data; "Real median personal income in the United States," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2019, fred.stlouisfed.org.

¹⁷Based on Emsi job postings scraping data; US national earnings estimates.

Exhibit 2

US workers in the top 35 Origins who have no four-year degree earn an average of about \$2,300 less than those who have one.

Comparison of salaries of Origin workers with and without bachelor's degree, \$

	Difference between annual salary of Origin workers overall and 4-year-degree holders, \$	Median advertised annual salary without 4-year degree, \$
Passenger-vehicle drivers ¹	-24,576	33,728
Light-truck drivers	-10,752	38,080
Retail salespersons	-5,888	29,120
Fast-food and counter workers	-4,224	22,848
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	-4,096	25,024
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	-4,096	33,472
Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists	-4,096	36,032
Carpenters	-3,072	39,552
Operating engineers ²	-3,072	39,552
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	-3,072	35,520
Home-health and personal-care aides	-2,944	26,048
First-line supervisors of food-preparation and serving workers	-2,304	32,960
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	-2,304	42,688
General maintenance and repair workers	-2,048	38,592
Customer-service representatives	-1,920	29,248
Secretaries and administrative assistants ³	-1,792	32,192
Receptionists and information clerks	-1,152	27,968
Security guards	-1,152	27,968
Fast-food cooks	-1,088	25,984
Janitors and cleaners ⁴	-1,024	29,120
General office clerks	-1,024	27,072
Cashiers	-512	24,512
Food-preparation workers	-384	25,536
Hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers	0	31,168
Restaurant cooks	0	27,072
Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators	0	28,096
Childcare workers	0	31,168
Landscaping workers and groundskeepers	128	29,504
Nursing assistants	384	32,192
Cooks (institutions and cafeterias)	640	28,480
Stockers and order fillers	1,240	31,168
Waiters and waitresses	1,240	25,024
Industrial-truck and tractor operators	1,240	31,168
Hand packers and packagers	1,240	27,072
Construction laborers	1,280	33,472

¹Except transit and intercity bus drivers.
²Includes other construction-equipment operators.
³Except legal, medical, and executive.
⁴Except maids and housekeeping cleaners.
 Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

Expanding opportunities for workers: Four insights

Our analysis revealed four insights that answer two of today's pressing employment questions: What job progressions are available to experience-based job seekers? And which opportunities are most likely to provide economic mobility? These insights can usefully inform actions over the next 12 months to best serve the job seekers who face the highest barriers to employment.

1 Expand access to 77 Gateway occupations to promote economic mobility and improve racial representation

Already, despite innumerable challenges and barriers, many US workers in lower-wage jobs have achieved job transitions based on their skills and experience rather than formal education. Their experiences provide instructive lessons for the 5.8 million currently unemployed job seekers who may wish to advance their economic prospects.

We focus in this section on Gateways, the type of good, viable jobs that enable the most economic mobility. Our analysis reveals that about 77 Gateways are especially effective at unlocking job progressions—that is, job-to-job moves into Target jobs. Expanding the hiring funnel into these Gateways could improve racial representation and employment opportunities across the country.

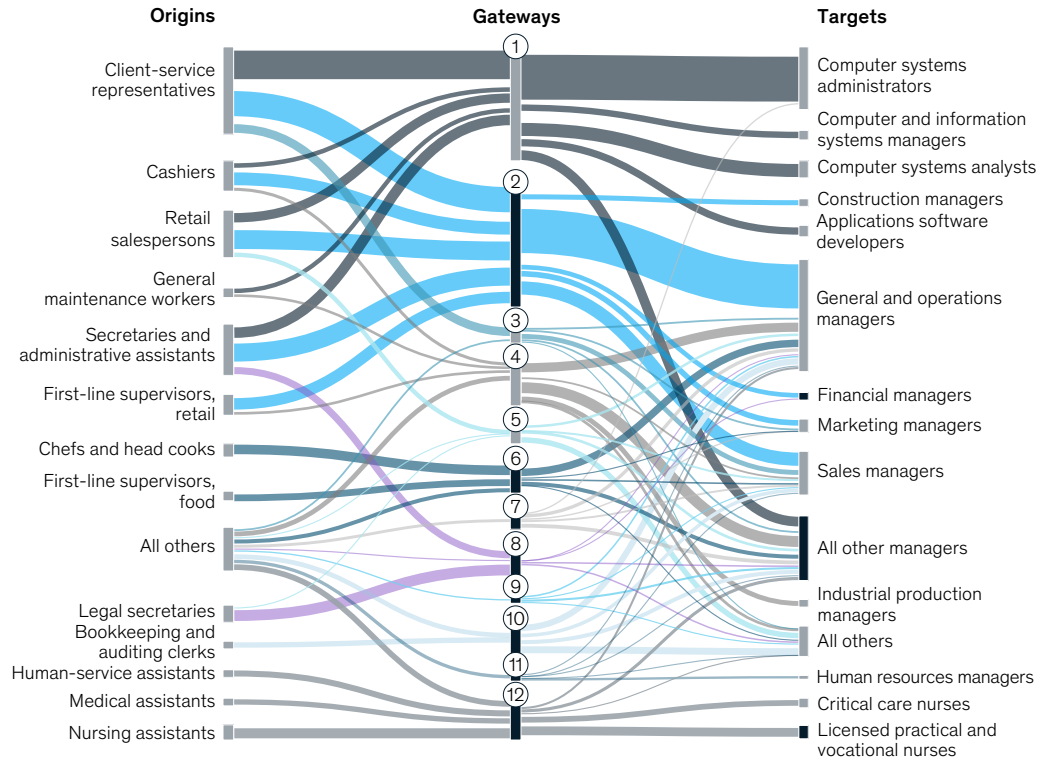
Unlock job progressions through Gateways

Gateway occupations can help people develop new skills or broaden existing skills, largely through work experience. In both cases, Gateways put job seekers in a better position to attain attractive Target occupations (Exhibit 3; see the Appendix for the full list of Gateways).

Exhibit 3

Selected Gateways, accessible from a broad range of Origins, have been particularly effective at helping job seekers advance economically.

■ Both Gateway and Target



Gateways		
1 Computer-user support specialists	5 Real estate sales agents	9 Training and development specialists
2 All other managers	6 Food-service managers	10 Financial managers
3 Services sales representatives	7 Business-operations specialists	11 Human resources specialists
4 First-line supervisors of production workers	8 Paralegals and legal assistants	12 Registered nurses

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

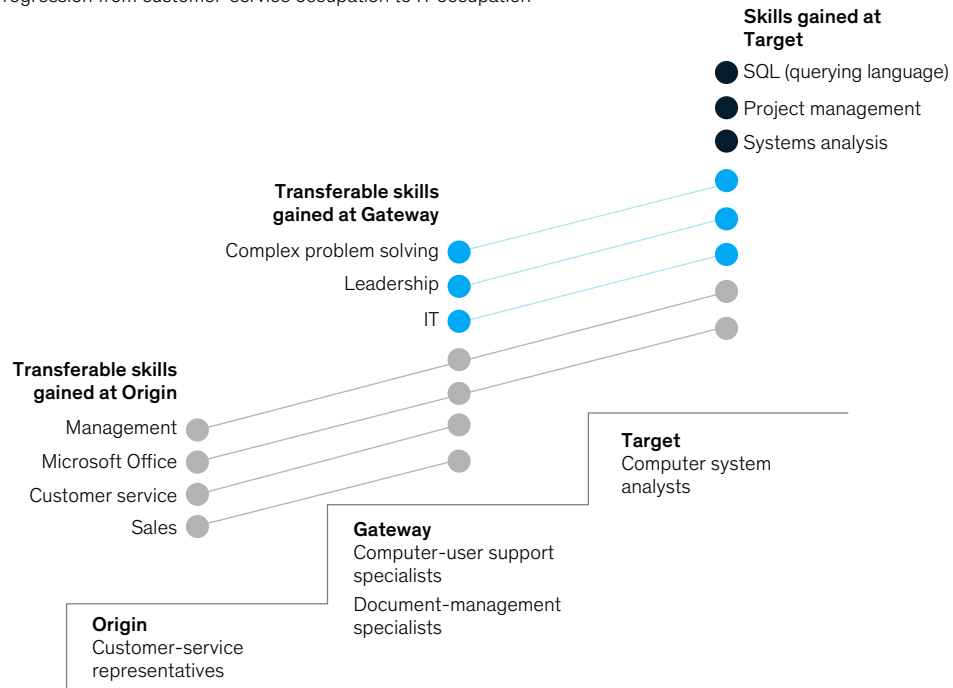
Take the following two prominent examples:

Exhibit 4a

A worker on an Origin-to-Gateway-to-Target progression can learn new skills and transfer and expand existing ones.

Two common pathways and their underlying skills¹

- 1 **Transferring skills and adding new ones**
Progression from customer-service occupation to IT occupation



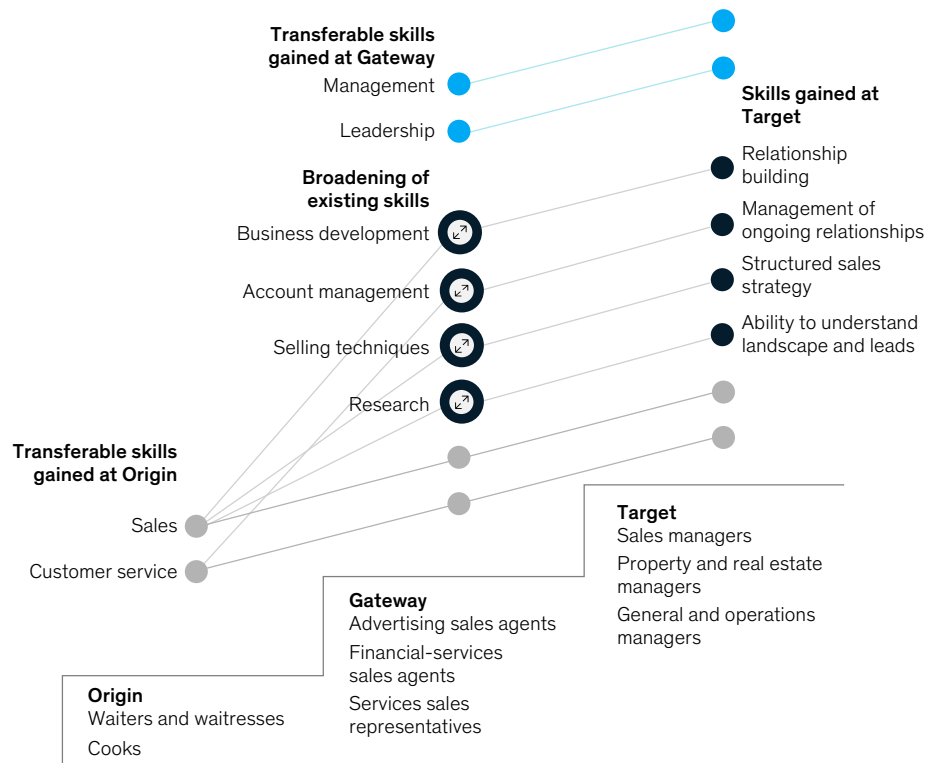
¹This exhibit highlights selective skills and occupations; it is not exhaustive of all skills or occupations.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics data; McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

Adding new skills—customer-service representatives moving to IT roles (Exhibit 4a). According to our historical data set, approximately 11,000 workers who had been customer-service representatives moved into good, entry-level IT roles and were able to pursue higher-wage, more sustainable work. IT roles such as computer-user support specialists or document-management specialists tend to require workers to have sales and customer-facing experience as well as a basic understanding of office software (for example, the Microsoft suite). These Gateway IT roles, in turn, enable people to boost specific technical-domain knowledge as well as the ability to apply this knowledge to real-world situations through complex problem solving—a skill that can be honed only by experience. These IT Gateway roles position workers for Target roles such as computer system analysts, which require problem-solving, business, and IT skills.

A worker on an Origin-to-Gateway-to-Target progression can learn new skills and transfer and expand existing ones.

Two common pathways and their underlying skills¹

2 **Transferring skills and broadening existing ones**
 Progression from food-service occupation to business occupation



¹This exhibit highlights selective skills and occupations; it is not exhaustive of all skills or occupations. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics data; McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

Broadening existing skills—food-services workers moving to business roles (Exhibit 4b). Learning from the roughly 7,000 transitions¹⁸ in the data set, we know it is possible, for instance, for food servers to move into business roles such as advertising sales agents, financial-services sales agents, or sales representatives for services. These business roles tend to require people to have sales and customer-service skills while helping them to build broader business-development and account-management skills and experience—for example,

¹⁸Number of transitions from any food-services Origin role to any business or legal Gateway role, based on Emsi’s 2019 US workforce transitions data set.

selling techniques, research, and account management—as well as general leadership and management skills, which are best learned through experience. Workers are then able to leverage their advanced skills to access Target roles such as sales managers (which require sales-management and business-development skills); property, real estate, and community-association managers (requiring sales and real estate knowledge); and general and operations managers.

Some of the largest Gateways (by volume of transitions in from Origins) can create many options for employment. First, they create pivot points people can use to switch between occupation families within sectors. Second, they tend to have cross-sector relevance, expanding job seekers' ability to switch into industries where the number of good jobs is growing (Exhibit 5). This allows workers to mitigate the risk of their career progressions and broadens the types of work available to them. This is especially true of digital and IT-related Gateway roles (for example, computer-user support specialists and software-quality-assurance engineers and testers), as well as business and legal roles (for example, HR specialists and training and development specialists).

Moreover, the top Gateway positions are not only prevalent across industries but also geographically dispersed across the United States rather than isolated in regional niches.¹⁹ This makes them widely relevant to job seekers across the country and means that workers in those jobs do not necessarily need to relocate to find attractive opportunities—something that would be difficult for many job seekers.²⁰

¹⁹Rework Community Insights Monitor, April 2, 2021, <https://www.atlantafed.org/cweo/data-tools.aspx>.

²⁰Opportunities vary by region. For example, metropolitan areas such as Naples, Florida, are significantly challenged by a concentration of hospitality-focused Origin occupations, which have been especially affected by the pandemic. Workers in Naples face greater challenges in pursuing job progressions than workers in a more diversified and larger metropolitan economy such as Atlanta, which has more industry and occupational options.

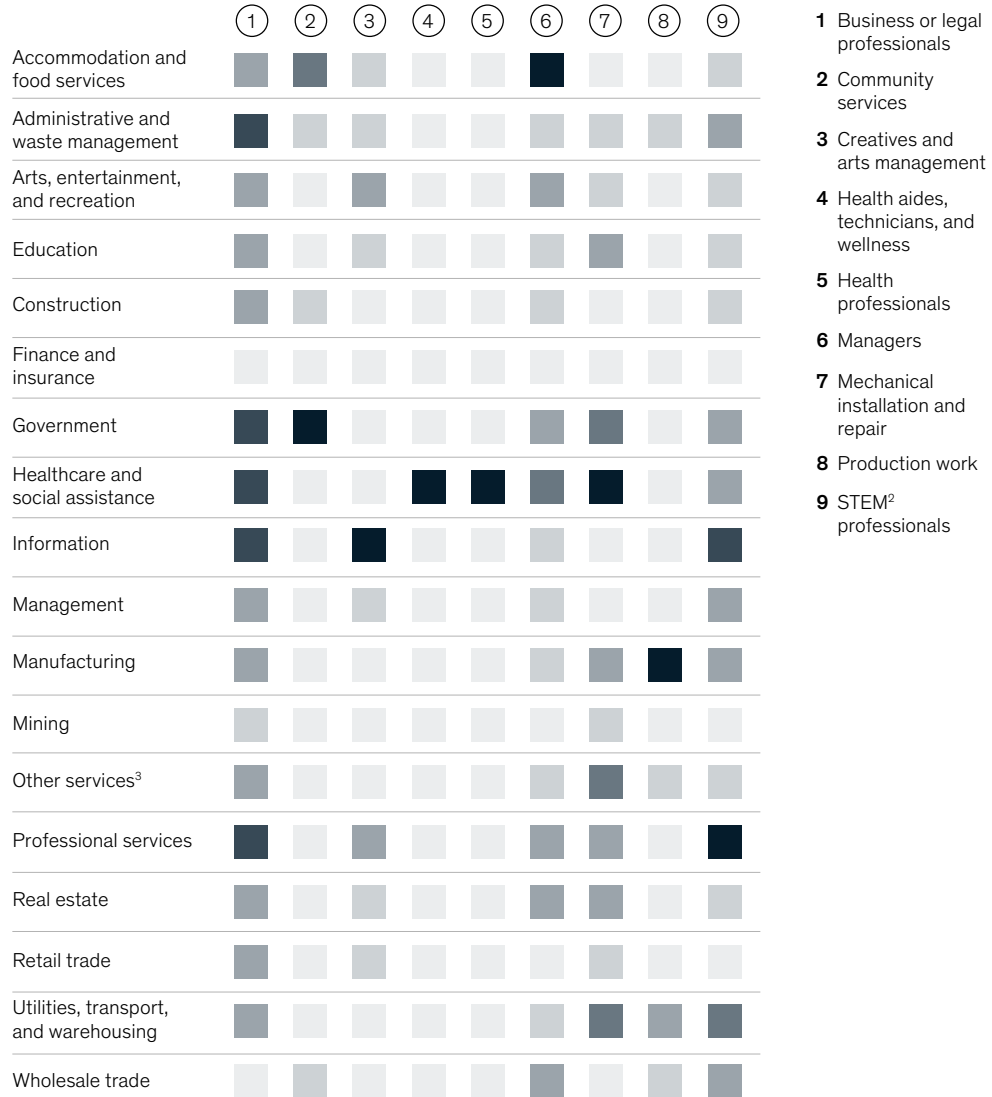
Some of the largest Gateways (by volume of transitions in from Origins) can create many options for employment.

The concentration of Gateway jobs is greater in some industries than others.

Relative concentration of Gateways in selected industries, 2020

Concentration of occupations¹ by industry:

High Low



- 1 Business or legal professionals
- 2 Community services
- 3 Creatives and arts management
- 4 Health aides, technicians, and wellness
- 5 Health professionals
- 6 Managers
- 7 Mechanical installation and repair
- 8 Production work
- 9 STEM² professionals

¹Occupations are grouped by the McKinsey Global Institute's categories, which combine some Gateways.

²Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

³Excludes public administration.

Source: McKinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

Close racial equity and gender gaps in Gateway roles

Crucially, the 77 Gateway occupations could be avenues to improving racial and gender representation in good jobs in the economy (Exhibit 6). Today, Black, Latinx, and female workers are overrepresented in Origins and underrepresented in Gateways and Targets. Helping people make the transition from Origins to Gateways and Targets could make the labor market more equitable and allow more Americans to benefit from good jobs. For this change to occur, the racial and gender barriers that exist across the hiring funnel will need to be addressed head-on.

What interventions can this insight inspire?

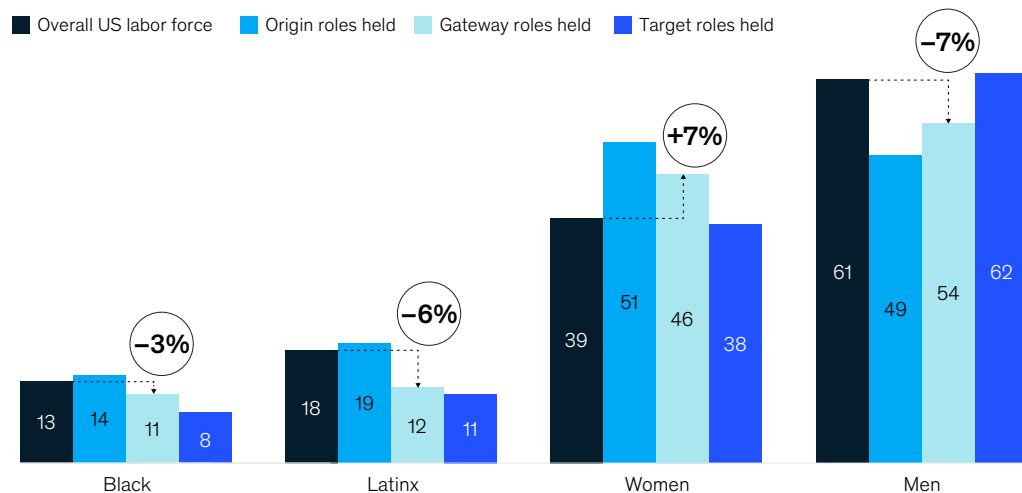
Those who support job seekers can take the following actions:

- Among institutions that engage and provide support to job seekers, expand awareness of both the 77 Gateways and the broader set of good, viable occupations.
- Set the aspiration for greater representation of people of color in Gateways and other good, viable occupations.

Exhibit 6

Expanding access to Gateways would improve racial representation in attractive roles.

Demographic employed in Origins and Gateways in 2021 compared with proportion of total US population in 2019,¹% of total



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.

¹ These data represent the percentage of each demographic employed in Origin roles and employed overall.

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

- Devote time and resources to understanding systemic barriers to achieving higher levels of representation (for example, the proximity of jobs to diverse neighborhoods and transportation)—and use the findings to inform actions.
- Focus on addressing racial and gender barriers, particularly in progressions into the 77 Gateway occupations, so that Black, Latinx, and female job seekers are able to transition to Gateways at least in the same proportion as they are employed in the Origins.²¹
- Support training providers in identifying, prioritizing, and making available the targeted training interventions that would allow more job seekers to access Gateways and other good, viable jobs.
- Help employers adjust to their hiring practices for Gateways and other good, viable jobs to draw on a wider talent pool that includes experience-based job seekers from Origin positions.

2 Recognize interpersonal skills

A striking pattern emerged in our analysis: the job progressions that create the most opportunities are those that depend on interpersonal skills. These skills include customer service, management, and communication. For 53 of the 77 Gateways (70 percent), job seekers were most often able to transfer interpersonal skills from their prior work in Origin roles.²²

What our analysis highlights goes beyond the mere fact that interpersonal skills are important, as employers increasingly recognize. More profoundly, interpersonal skills are the artery that runs through experience-led job progressions, connecting Origins to Gateways to Targets. They are the special element that has enabled job seekers to achieve economic mobility through work experience.

Why? First, interpersonal skills are often best learned through experience—for example, a classroom curriculum can only go so far in developing the interpersonal judgment to know how to make a customer feel comfortable, land a sale, or lead a team of disparate personalities. Second, some on-the-job learning is harder than others. The interpersonal skills behind service, sales, and home care, for example, take time and repetition to learn; experience matters.

²¹Also see Sarah Coury, Jess Huang, Alexis Krivkovich, Ankur Kumar, Sara Prince, and Lareina Yee, “Women in the Workplace 2020,” McKinsey.com; and Bryan Hancock, James Manyika, Monne Williams, Jackie Wong, and Lareina Yee, “Race in the workplace: The Black experience in the US private sector,” February 21, 2021, McKinsey.com.

²²Based on most common transitions into these Gateway roles from Origin roles.

The pattern starts with the Origin-to-Gateway transition. Origin occupations with the best Gateway options, combining both the variety and the accessibility of options, tend to be people-oriented roles, such as customer-service representatives, retail salespeople, secretaries, and supervisors—alongside a few Origin roles with specialized, technical skills, such as bookkeeping clerks (Exhibit 7).

In Origin-to-Gateway transitions, job seekers who used to be customer-service representatives, frontline salespeople, and home health aides, to take a few examples, learned on the job how to engage in a productive dialogue, read human emotion, and collaborate—all interpersonal skills. These skills cannot be learned instantly, which means they have some market value. And they cannot be learned well in a classroom alone; they require experience. Job seekers used these skills to position themselves for Gateways such as HR managers, real estate sales agents, and business-operations specialists.

Next, take Gateway-to-Target transitions. The most common skill overlaps between Gateways and Targets involve people leadership, problem solving, independent project and time management, and communication. Put differently, people in Gateway roles such as HR managers, real estate sales agents, and business-operations specialists built on the skills they had gained in their Origin roles—skills that require basic interpersonal judgment—by learning the art of project and people management. These skills can act as a springboard to a wide range of management roles in many industries. And, again, these are skills best learned by doing.

People skills alone are not sufficient, however. Many progressions require job seekers to build technical competencies—for example, calibration to become an electronics-engineering technician, legal research know-how to become a legal assistant, and health informatics to become a radiologic technologist. However, most of those technical skills can be gained through targeted training, which a job seeker can combine with experience-built people skills to make a transition to a new role.

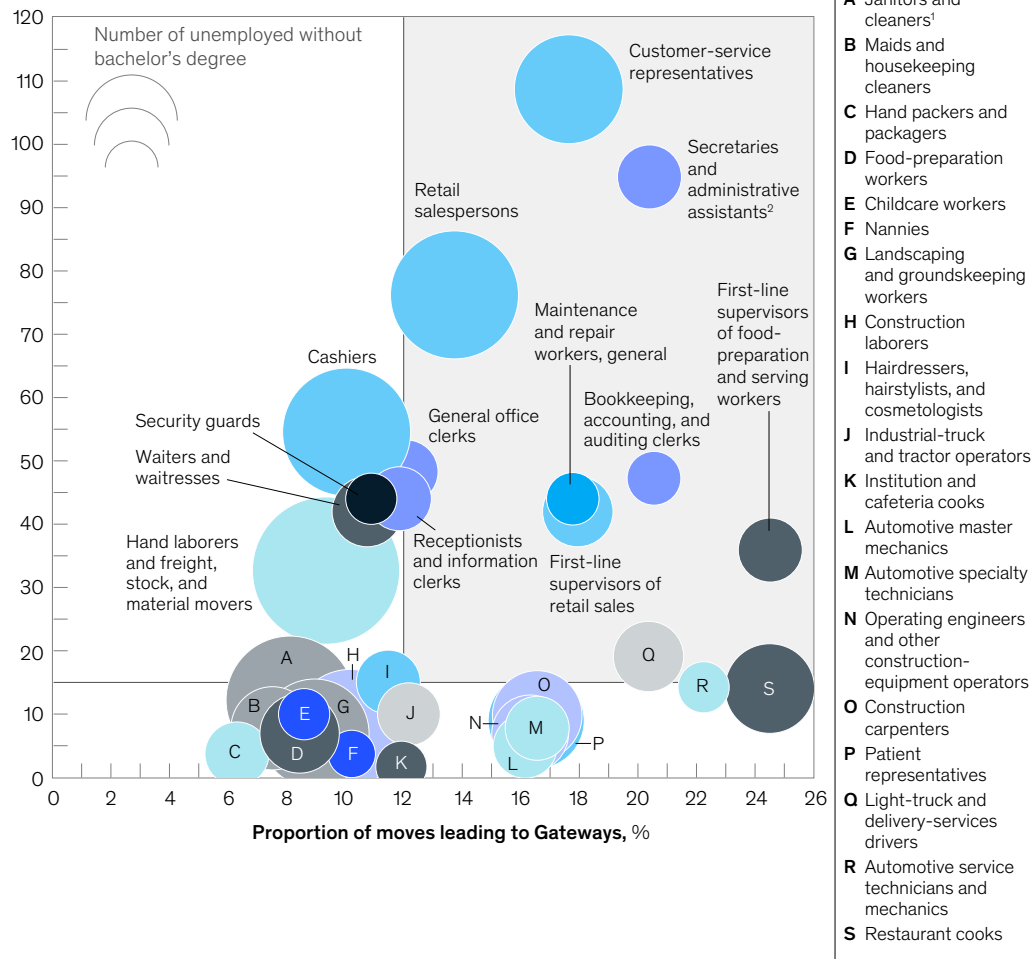
In sum, to enable millions more US workers to access experience-based job progressions, employers, policy makers, and worker-serving organizations need to expand access and hiring into the roles that depend on the capabilities developed through experience; help job seekers recognize and market these skills, which they may not realize they have; and help employers identify which of their hiring needs depend on experience-based learning and draw upon a wider range of talent to provide them.

Origins with the most Gateway options tend to be people-oriented roles or roles that require specialized, technical skills.

Likelihood of Origin worker to access Gateways, top 35 Origins

- Occupations with the most options to move to Gateway roles
- Community services
- Food services
- Property maintenance and agriculture
- Transportation services
- Health aides, technicians, and wellness workers
- Office-support workers
- Builders
- Mechanical installation and repair
- Customer service and sales
- Production workers

Number of available progressions for Origin role



Note: Based on Emsi database compiled from resumes and job postings and McKinsey analysis. Data unavailable for select Origin occupations.

¹ Does not include maids and housekeeping cleaners.

² Does not include legal, medical, and executive.

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data

What interventions can this insight inspire?

Those supporting job seekers by providing valuable experience can take the following actions:

- Help job seekers reframe developed interpersonal skills so that the skills can be demonstrated as assets in the job market.
- Prioritize proven training offerings that address the most common Origin-to-Gateway and Gateway-to-Target skills that are technical rather than interpersonal—especially for digital and IT Gateway roles with broad, cross-industry relevance (for example, SQL and basic IT for computer-user support specialists and document-management systems and Microsoft Access software for document-management specialists).
- Expand job seekers' access to relevant and targeted technical training through innovative funding models and additional support for program completion.
- Design a means of providing and validating experience-based skills and on-the-job learning (such as through the recognition of the value of an Origin role within the candidate pool).
- Provide employers with incentives to focus on the value of experience, not just credentials, in their recruiting, hiring, and promotion practices—especially for workers from Origin roles (for example, as a criterion for R&D or economic-development funding).

3 Provide more hands-on support to job seekers positioning themselves for good, viable occupations

Identifying attractive job progressions for these workers is only a starting point. It is also critical to understand which jobs will be in demand by employers. As of February 2021, roughly nine million US workers were unemployed and looking for jobs.²³ What jobs will return—and how quickly—to meet this need?

Nobody has a crystal ball to predict the shape of the postpandemic recovery; it is uncertain. We need to consider different scenarios. To that end, the McKinsey Global Institute and Oxford Economics analyzed potential COVID-19 demand-recovery scenarios.²⁴ Their analysis suggests that both opportunities and challenges exist.

²³Based on February 2021 Community Population Survey microdata on unemployment, US Census Bureau, [census.gov](https://www.census.gov).

²⁴"Nine scenarios for the COVID-19 economy," April 30, 2021, [McKinsey.com](https://www.mckinsey.com).

On the one hand, there is a clear opportunity: in the scenario global business executives considered most likely,²⁵ Gateways and other good, viable jobs account for nearly 20 percent of likely employment growth over the next year, or about one million jobs (Exhibit 8). Of these, half are likely to be Gateways, the best springboards to economic mobility. This suggests that there is a material opportunity to pursue a more inclusive economic recovery.

On the other hand, job seekers and those supporting them need to be ready for challenges: while some recent studies foresee an economic rebound, the economic recovery from the pandemic could be prolonged. In scenarios analyzed to date by McKinsey and Oxford Economics, employment might not recover to pre-COVID-19 levels until 2022 in the optimistic case or until as late as 2024 in the case considered most likely by employers; the outlooks are similar to those from analyses by Moody’s and other research leaders.²⁶ That said, a successful

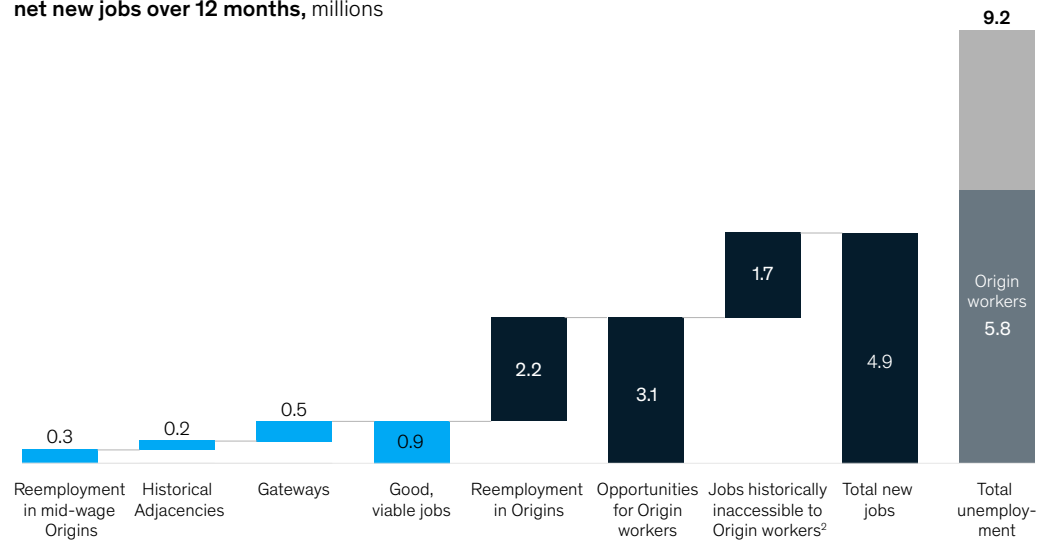
²⁵Last McKinsey survey as of March 2021.

²⁶Dua, “Achieving an inclusive US economic recovery”; Moody’s Analytics, moodyanalytics.com.

Exhibit 8

Almost one million good, viable jobs are expected to be available in the coming year.

In Scenario A1,¹ reemployment opportunities for US workers without 4-year degree, net new jobs over 12 months, millions



¹In scenario A1, potential GDP recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels will occur in 2022 at the earliest. For additional information about the various scenarios, see

²“Nine scenarios for the COVID-19 economy,” mckinsey.com.

³Includes both Target roles that are inaccessible to Origin workers through direct transitions and roles that require a four-year degree or higher.

Source: McKinsey analysis, in partnership with Oxford Economics; McKinsey Global Institute

infrastructure, climate, or manufacturing-reshoring investment program could accelerate job recovery—leading to a faster, more robust recovery in 2021 and 2022 and providing even more employment opportunities for good, viable jobs in construction, manufacturing, and technology, among other industries. Given the current uncertainty, policy makers and worker-serving organizations need to prepare to support job seekers through this period of economic recovery.

In every plausible scenario, job seekers from Origin positions will need hands-on support from worker-supporting institutions to navigate the complexities of the labor market during the recovery. A first complexity is that, among the roughly one million good, viable job opportunities expected in the next 12 months (Exhibit 8), there will be varying degrees of demand, salary increases, and accessibility from Origins (Exhibit 9). In addition, workers from Origin roles will face competition for good, viable occupations from unemployed workers who formerly held those jobs. Workers will need guidance to set the right priorities in their local job searches and avoid investing in the process only to face dead ends.

Consider long-term risks such as automation

Most workers urgently need to get back to work, but some occupations that could help satisfy a short-term employment need have potential long-term risks. The good, viable occupations we have identified present attractive opportunities in the near term, but 51 percent of them—particularly those in building and construction and mechanical installation, repair, and production—are at risk in the longer term of being eliminated by automation (Exhibit 10).

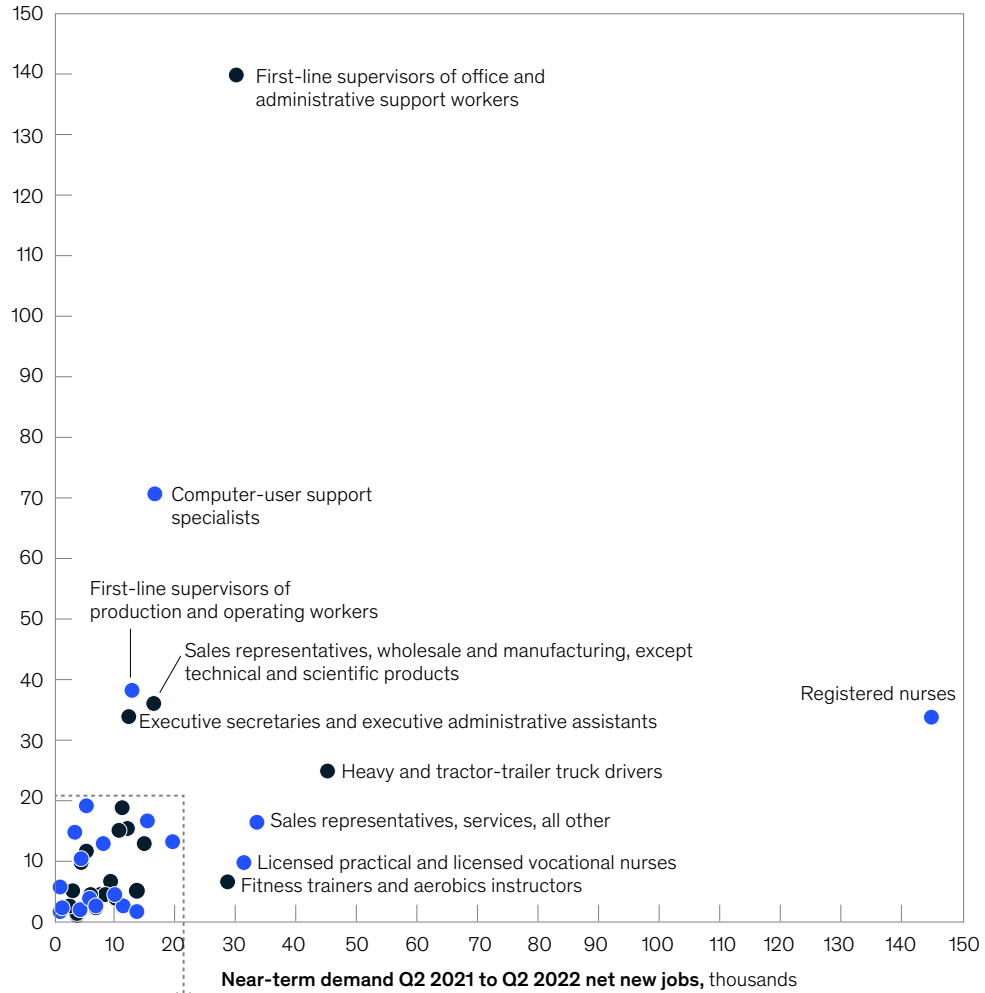
A successful infrastructure, climate, or manufacturing-reshoring investment program could accelerate job recovery—providing even more employment opportunities for good, viable jobs in construction, manufacturing, and technology, among other industries.

Exhibit 9

Around 50 good, viable occupations are likely to see demand in 2021.

● Indicates Gateway

Volume of historical transitions from Origin jobs to highest-demand good, viable jobs, thousands



Pipe fitters and steamfitters	Automotive service technicians and mechanics	Training and development specialists	Food-service managers
Plumbers	Heating and air conditioning mechanics and installers	Meeting, convention, and event planners	Property, real estate, and community association managers
Operating engineers and other construction-equipment operators	Industrial machinery mechanics	Graphic designers	Software quality assurance engineers and testers
Advertising sales agents	Telecommunications equipment installers and repairers, except line installers	Teachers and instructors, all other	Document management specialists
First-line supervisors of nonretail sales workers	Bus and truck mechanics and diesel-engine specialists	Dental hygienists	Paralegals and legal assistants
Chefs and head cooks	Welders, cutters, and welder fitters	Radiologic technologists	Producers
Production, planning, and expediting clerks	Machinists	Surgical technologists	
First-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators	Human resources specialists	Health technologists and technicians, all other	
First-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers		Respiratory therapists	
		Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	
		Financial managers, branch or department	

Note: SOC is the US Standard Occupation Classification system.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, McKinsey analysis using Emsi data, and McKinsey Global Institute

Exhibit 10

Automation and offshoring put some good, viable jobs at risk of displacement in the coming five to ten years.

● Mid to high risk ● Low to very low risk, or risk unknown



¹Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Sources: McKinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

People can still consider these at-risk jobs as good, viable jobs—after all, in the near term, they provide employment, offer higher wages, and could open the door to economic mobility. The boost of a federal-infrastructure or climate-investment program could support a subset of these jobs over the next decade; in particular, construction jobs could be in high demand to support capital projects.

But there is a risk that workers who enter these jobs may settle in for too long and be blindsided by another wrenching disruption a few years down the road. People may need to transition again, and they may need support to understand the possible nature of the transition and the steps they need to take. It is

important, as roles continue to change with the growing digital economy, that workers and those who support them continue to identify new opportunities where experience is valued and training—both on the job and alongside the job—evolves to meet the changing needs.

In practice, this means that organizations that support job seekers will need to shift from one-off interactions—the norm today—to providing ongoing counseling and support. They could consider looking out for flags and triggers for risks that require action, be ready to provide ongoing training options and other types of support, and help workers explore new opportunities before disruption strikes. Moreover, to be able to benefit from retaining their talent, employers should invest in training and reskilling efforts to prepare their workforce for change (see sidebar “Emerging examples of ongoing worker support”).

What interventions can this insight inspire?

Supporters of job seekers can take the following actions:

- Over the next six to 12 months, encourage workers from Origin jobs to consider Gateways and the full set of good, viable occupations with the highest likely demand. In parallel, build their readiness for the rest of the 77 Gateways, for which opportunities will grow as the economic recovery gains momentum in 2022.
- To meet hiring needs for Gateway occupations and other good, viable jobs, enlist employers to draw on their employees who are experienced job seekers and to arm them with the ability to conduct outreach, interviews, selection, and post-hire development in a way that values training or know-how gained through experience.
- Using skills-based hiring practices, recruit unemployed workers from Origin roles to move to Gateway positions and other good, viable occupations that have immediate hiring needs.
- Facilitate collaboration between employers and training providers to identify and deliver the targeted training and other wraparound support that would make experience-based job candidates viable for Gateways and other good, viable jobs in the next six to 12 months.



Emerging examples of ongoing worker support

The National Urban League's signature Urban Reentry Jobs Program (URJP) is designed for the formerly incarcerated. Many find their first employment in industrial jobs due to the industry's willingness to welcome returning citizens to fill positions at livable wages. The URJP's primary goal is to connect participants to good jobs, while providing wraparound services that address common barriers such as child support, obtaining a driver's license, and

education or skill-credential attainment. This comprehensive continuum of customized services contributes to lower recidivism rates while filling job vacancies.

Similarly, Goodwill of Western New York's Manufacture Your Future program offers curated skills building, vocational training, and work-readiness training to help unemployed workers find a path to a family-sustaining wage. Candidates who've been placed in jobs receive

continued support to help them remain successful in their role. This kind of support benefits not only the workers but also their employers, boosting retention and reducing costs associated with high turnover of entry-level roles.

- Track monthly the leading indicators of hiring trends by occupation, adjusting the prioritized good, viable and Gateway occupations as the recovery progresses.
- Define new operating models for engaging job seekers on an ongoing basis, to help them navigate ongoing automation risks and other disruptions. These will vary by worker-serving organization, training provider, employer, union, and other type of institution (for example, programs devoted to longer-term career or professional coaching and support in addition to near-term job coaching).
- Accelerate investments in institutional capacity and capability to make these new, ongoing support models feasible (for example, sustainable funding models for wraparound support services to job seekers, including longer-term career coaching).

4 Make healthcare, industrials, and cross-sector digital job progressions more accessible

Our analysis highlights two industries of substantial importance for the next 12 months: healthcare and industrials (comprising manufacturing and construction). Both industries pose a conundrum: while they are the likeliest to see growth—not just generically but in the jobs that matter to people without a bachelor’s degree—they also face some of the thorniest challenges related to job access and advancement.

In addition, although the information sector will not have as much growth or as large an upside as the occupations most accessible to workers from Origins (growth likely is skewed toward more advanced, high-tech occupations), computer-user support specialists and software-quality-assurance engineers and testers, among other digital roles, will be in high demand, and these positions are available in virtually every sector of the economy.

Healthcare: By far the most growth in good, viable jobs in 2021 will be in the healthcare industry, ranging from Gateway roles such as registered nurses,²⁷ licensed vocational nurses, and dental hygienists to other good jobs such as emergency medical technicians and paramedics and healthcare support workers (Exhibit 11). Indeed, driven by an aging US population, healthcare is on a long trajectory of job growth that has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenge is that healthcare occupations require a great deal of job-specific preparation. First, allied health roles require extensive training and certification—and thus time and money. The state-by-state variations in certifications, licensing, and other requirements present further complications. Furthermore, the industry is marked by persistent occupational segregation: research shows that Black and Latinx workers—and particularly Black women—face structural impediments to advancing to mid-level and higher-level roles.²⁸

Industrials: After healthcare, the next five industries are similar to one another in terms of likely growth in good, viable jobs. However, the industrials industry (comprising manufacturing and construction in Exhibit 11) has a wild-card upside that other industries do not: a major federal-infrastructure or climate-spending program could massively boost growth in good, viable industrials jobs—ranging

²⁷Also a Target occupation.

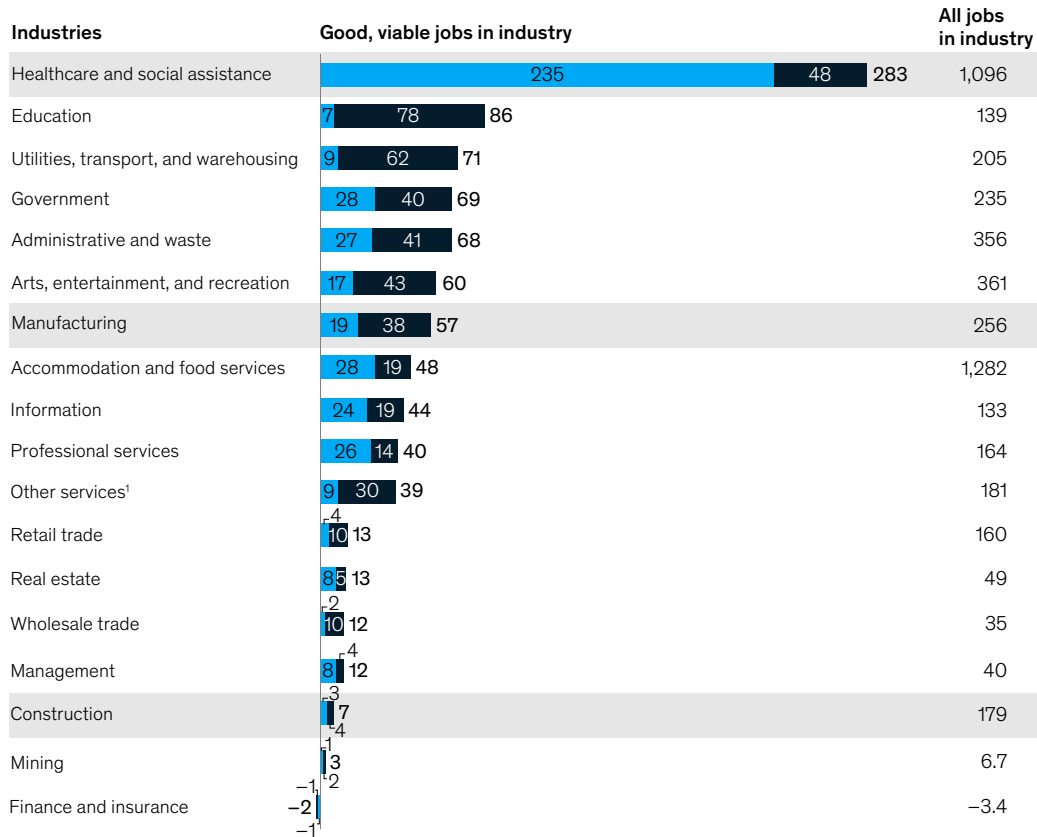
²⁸For more on occupational segregation, see Rebecca Dixon, “Racism and the economy: Focus on employment,” Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, November 2, 2020, minneapolisfed.org.

Exhibit 11

Healthcare will have by far the greatest demand for good, viable jobs during the coming year.

■ Area of focus ■ Gateway ■ All other good, viable jobs

12-month new employment, Q2 of 2021 to Q2 of 2022, thousands



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.
¹Excludes public administration.
 Source: McKinsey analysis, in partnership with Oxford Economics; McKinsey Global Institute

from first-line supervisors and those in construction trades to operating engineers and industrial-machinery mechanics. What makes industrials tricky over time, however, is that it historically has generated few Gateways.

That said, job seekers from Origins can access very attractive jobs in industrials—not least in construction trades such as plumbing, pipe fitting, and welding. These can be a route to exciting and economically appealing careers. In addition, the future could hold new promise, as investment in infrastructure could lead to not only expansion of current job progressions but also the creation of new, more digitally oriented occupations and progressions within industrials.

Cross-sector digital roles: While the information sector has less potential than some other sectors for growth of good, viable jobs for experience-based job seekers, that doesn't mean that IT and digital jobs are irrelevant to those workers. On the contrary, some of the good, viable occupations that are likely to have the greatest growth are IT and digital roles—for example, software-quality-assurance engineers and testers and telecommunications-engineering specialists.

Demand exists for these roles not merely in the information sector but also across many other sectors, including healthcare and industrials. Their broad relevance reflects the sizable (and accelerating) digitization that is underway in every sector of the economy. History suggests that these digital roles are highly accessible to workers from Origin occupations, but challenges lurk: in particular, lower-wage job seekers often don't have the time, funds for hardware, or access to reliable, affordable internet connectivity to take advantage of the digital-skills training options available. In addition, employers may not yet be aware of the viability of filling these roles with workers without a bachelor's degree (but with the relevant experience or targeted training).

The challenges presented by these opportunity areas are not insurmountable. Given the hiring opportunities at stake, it is worth considering focused public-, private-, and social-sector investment in expanding access to opportunities in these sectors (see sidebar "Emerging examples of training and career-development support").

What interventions can this insight inspire?

Employers, government agencies, and others supporting job seekers can take the following actions.

In healthcare:

- Focus on making it easier for job seekers without a four-year degree to access a variety of Gateway healthcare occupations and other good, viable roles, given the significantly growing demand (for example, provide financial support for training, employer sourcing, and hiring commitment).
- Expand employment and relevant training opportunities for Origin workers from other industries to enter the healthcare field and be successful on a long-term career track in the sector, potentially leveraging their existing people-oriented skills.



Emerging examples of training and career-development support

In healthcare, Rework America Alliance partners such as Futuro Health in California are creating alternative training and apprenticeship pathways. Futuro Health aims to graduate 10,000 new licensed or credentialed allied healthcare workers by 2024 to meet the state's high demand for healthcare workers. Getting workers into these jobs required the creation of a full plan that includes training partnerships with employers and labor-management training.

In industrials, North America's Building Trades Union (NABTU), an Alliance partner, is undertaking its own training and readiness efforts. In 2007, NABTU created a multicraft training curriculum for use in building trades apprenticeship readiness programs (ARPs). Building trades ARPs aim to prepare young people and transitioning adults to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs—which are entryways to good, middle-wage jobs in the US construction industry. Across the United States, there are currently more than 175 NABTU ARPs, which are sponsored by state or local building trades councils, training coordinators, and joint apprenticeship

training committees in partnership with local community groups, construction contractors, government agencies, and schools. The building trades ARPs seek to increase the following:

- the number of qualified candidates for apprenticeships across all crafts
- the diversity of apprenticeship candidates by recruiting women, people of color, and veterans
- the retention rate of apprentices by providing them with a deeper understanding of both the industry and the role of craft unions in construction

The educational foundation for the building trades ARPs is the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, or MC3—a standardized, comprehensive, more than 120-hour construction curriculum.

For tech roles, Per Scholas, another Alliance partner, works with employers to design market-relevant, technology-sector courses that are occupation-specific and lead to better hiring outcomes, at no cost to the job seeker.

Per Scholas provides not only career-coaching support during the immersive training but also ongoing mentorship even after job attainment to help workers navigate their longer-term careers and reach a thriving wage (125 percent above AMI) within two years after the completion of training.

For many of the large companies involved in the Alliance, including Microsoft, IBM, Google, Workday, and Walmart, an inclusive recovery requires programs that develop digital skills among people hit the hardest by job losses, including those with lower incomes, women, and underrepresented minorities. Each of these companies has developed and launched digital-skills initiatives to help workers access the skills training that will assist in their job progression.

In industrials:

- Build awareness of career trajectories in the trades and inform workers of the nature of these jobs, including that many don't involve heavy physical work or challenging physical environments.
- Focus on investing in and formalizing career progressions that unlock economic mobility through construction, production, and maintenance routes, including on-the-job training in technology to keep workers' abilities current and relevant.
- In parallel, enable more job seekers to enter the trades via earn-and-learn accessible routes, such as ARPs and registered apprenticeship programs, as well as employer-specific support for reentering adults who choose a career in industrials (for example, providing transportation when jobs aren't near urban or minority-centric neighborhoods).

Supporting recovery: Taking action on the front lines

The four insights discussed in the previous section are meant to inform action that focuses on where there might be new job possibilities for unemployed people without a four-year degree. While this analysis is national in scope, it offers a framework for understanding local labor markets and sharpening the actions to be taken in local communities.

The Alliance was formed expressly to support organizations that serve job seekers on the front lines. As such, this report is a beginning—to equip employers and worker-serving institutions with the capabilities and tools to better engage the significant postpandemic pool of experienced workers and job seekers.

Making insights usable

We have developed some tools that make the analyses described in this report usable on the front lines. One resource is a Rework Community Insights Monitor (RCIM),²⁹ which allows local decision makers to analyze the landscape of Origins, Gateways, and Targets at a city or regional level and decide where to invest resources to ensure the most opportunity for unemployed workers in a given place. It can also be used interactively to understand the range and availability of these occupations in particular regions.

Another resource is a Job Progression Tool,³⁰ which provides those who serve unemployed workers with data on job progressions, Gateways, Targets, demand, risk, skills, and local job postings, thereby enabling users to discuss career opportunities with job seekers. We co-created the tool with coaches and career navigators, designing it to reflect the reality of how they engage job seekers from day to day.


²⁹Rework Community Insights Monitor (RCIM), <https://www.atlantafed.org/cweo/data-tools/rework-community-insights-monitor.aspx>.

³⁰Job Progression Tool, <https://jobprogressions.com>.

Screenshot of RCIM and Job Progression Tool

Rework Community Insights Monitor

Share of Metro Employment

2.9%  17.6%

Filter by Job Category

Gateways

Filter by Year

2020

Filter by Job Family

(All)

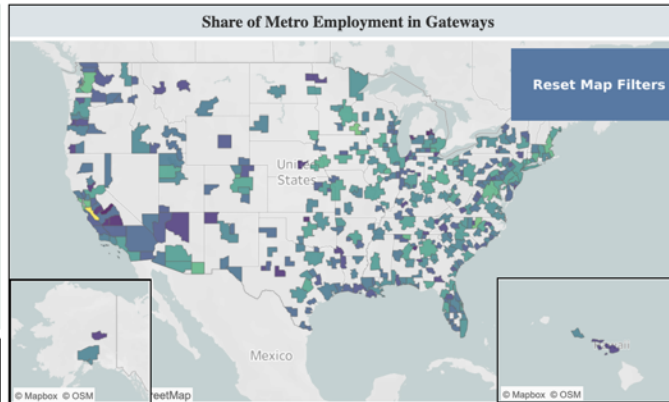
Click on the map to select a metro area and filter to fill the charts below.

Use the Reset Map Filters button on the map to clear your selection and the Home button to reset the view.

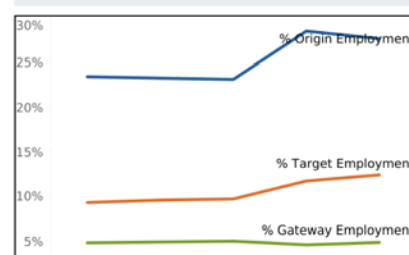
To select a metro, use the drop-down menu below.

Hover over a metro to view additional information.

Share of Metro Employment in Gateways




Change in Share of Total Employment (National)



Top Gateway Employment (National)

Registered Nurses	2,613,040
Software Developers And Software Quality Assurance...	1,408,590
Financial Managers	594,810
Human Resources Specialists	590,130
Computer User Support Specialists	581,720
Licensed Practical And Licensed Vocational Nurses	557,980

Beta version with preliminary data. We welcome your feedback and suggestions and we're committed to making the tool better through your input and usage.



Job Progression Tool

The Job Progression tool was developed by McKinsey & Company, on behalf of the [ReWork America Alliance](#), to spark progress for job seekers who have skills and experience but lack a traditional four-year degree. Toward more resilient, mid-demand occupations with wages above median wages.¹ The highlighted occupations and all the accompanying results, including pay, skill gaps and success likelihood, are tailored for this group of job-seekers and uses national EMER, Burning Glass, McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), and U.S. Department of Labor data.² The tool draws on [historical transitions data](#) to pave a way to success.³ For a policymaker view, explore the [Community Dashboard](#), created by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

[Tutorial](#) [FAQs](#)

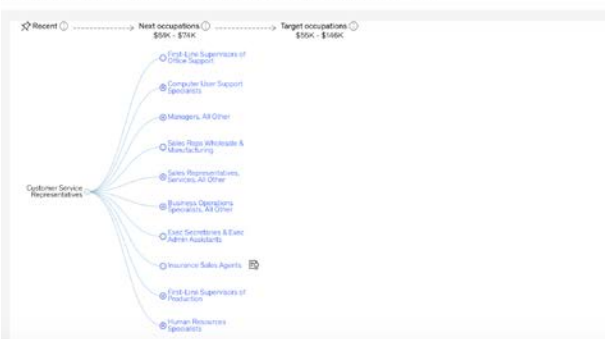
Occupation category: Recent occupation: Occupation FRP:

Building your brighter future

Explore these potential occupations with pay that is often above median wage, offer skill-building opportunities, and is sorted by how 4 million people have successfully historically transitioned.^{3,4} As a career coach, have a chat with your client about which occupations make sense and keep in mind that training may be required. Certifications may be required on occupations marked with a certificate icon.^{5,6}

Recent Next occupations Target occupations

\$50k - \$75k \$50k - \$100k



First Line Supervisors of Office Support	\$57k
Computer User Support Specialists	\$50k
Managers, All Other	
Sales Reps Wholesale & Manufacturing	\$60k
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	\$58k
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	\$74k

Unlocking experience-based job progressions for millions of workers

35

Partnering with worker-serving organizations and employers

We have also developed digital training modules³¹ for career coaches about how to provide job seekers with skills-based, human-centered, and equity-driven career guidance. The logic of and examples from this report are woven into the fabric of the training.

We are also working with employers to understand their most important hiring needs; identify where those needs intersect with the good, viable jobs relevant to job seekers without a four-year degree; and provide toolkits³² to help employers more effectively source and hire those job seekers based on their experience. Developed with input from leading employers and small businesses, these resources also help employers adopt more equitable hiring practices that open up opportunities for more workers.

Initial testing of insights

We have begun initial deployment of these insights and the assets of the Alliance collaboration in seven locations: Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and the Finger Lakes region of New York, as well as the states of Indiana and Colorado. These communities were selected based on the number of low-income, unemployed job seekers; the presence of our partners; the opportunity to make strides on racial equity; and the prospect of real hiring opportunities for Gateway and Target roles—including in healthcare and industrials. Our objective is to help workers access better jobs and improve job progressions, and we aim to reach it through the following strategies:

- helping to better align education and training offerings to the needs of their economies and in the service of good, viable career progressions
- empowering job coaches to elevate meaningful career progressions for job seekers

³¹“Career coaching training: Equipping career coaches to better serve a workforce in crisis by connecting them with promising jobs and supporting workers to highlight the skills they can bring to these jobs,” Rework America Alliance resources, markle.org.

³²“Employer toolkit: Empowering employers to increase diversity, improve hiring, and help move to establish an economy that works for all,” Rework America Alliance resources, markle.org/alliance-resources.

- providing incentives for employers to value experience as much as traditional credentials and create wider, more racially inclusive practices to engage a broader workforce
- increasing overall economic mobility within these communities

The Rework America Alliance is dedicated to aiding unemployed workers from low-wage occupations secure good jobs as the country comes out of this economic crisis. This report makes clear that these workers have experience that is of enormous value to growing occupations and proposes near-term and longer-term means of helping workers secure those good jobs.



Appendix

About 77 Gateways are particularly effective at unlocking job progressions.

Full list of Gateway occupations¹

Gateway roles (ordered from highest to lowest count of inward transitions from Origins)	Proportion of transitions from Origins	Risk profile	Wage category ²	Demand category ³
		High Low N/A	High Upper middle Middle Low N/A	
Managers, all other	0.47			
Computer-user support specialists ⁴	0.45			
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	0.47			
Registered nurses	0.46			
Business operations specialists, all other	0.41			
Paralegals and legal assistants	0.62			
Human resources specialists	0.46			
Sales representatives, services, all other	0.39			
Real estate sales agents	0.37			
Financial managers, branch or department	0.35			
Food-service managers	0.57			
Training and development specialists	0.44			
Property, real estate, and community association managers	0.39			
Purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products	0.43			
Loan officers	0.42			
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	0.55			
Human resources managers	0.34			
Electronics engineering technicians	0.41			
Sales agents, financial services	0.48			
Logisticians	0.46			
Software quality assurance engineers and testers	0.38			
Storage and distribution managers	0.38			
Social and community service managers	0.39			
First-line supervisors of police and detectives	0.38			
Insurance adjusters, examiners, and investigators	0.49			
Radiologic technologists	0.46			

¹ Occupations are denoted by the US Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system’s categories, which combine some Gateways. Demand levels are for a 12-month period.

² High (\$78,000+); Upper middle (\$70,000–\$78,000); Middle (\$42,000–\$70,000).

³ High (25,000+); Medium high (10,000–25,000); Medium (5,000–10,000); Medium low (1,000–5,000); Low (0–1,000).

⁴ Risk profile for computer user support specialists is based on analysis across SOC 15-11 occupations.

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data; Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey Global Institute data

About 77 Gateways are particularly effective at unlocking job progressions.

Full list of Gateway occupations¹

Gateway roles (ordered from highest to lowest count of inward transitions from Origins)	Proportion of transitions from Origins	Risk profile	Wage category ²	Demand category ³
		High Low N/A	High Upper middle Middle	High Low N/A
Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists	0.48			
Surgical technologists	0.63			
Architectural drafters	0.36			
Art directors	0.51			
Designers, all other	0.41			
Dental hygienists	0.71			
Municipal firefighters	0.52			
Respiratory therapists	0.49			
Lodging managers	0.50			
Interior designers	0.42			
Environmental science and protection technicians, including health	0.45			
Manufacturing production technicians	0.59			
Claims examiners, property and casualty insurance	0.51			
Producers	0.40			
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	0.48			
Advertising sales agents	0.36			
Credit analysts	0.47			
Equal opportunity representatives and officers	0.50			
Medical equipment repairer	0.45			
Mechanical engineering technicians	0.34			
Fashion designers	0.51			
Insurance underwriters	0.39			
Document management specialists	0.57			
Diagnostic medical sonographers	0.47			
Radiologic technicians	0.57			
Health technologists and technicians, all other	0.60			

¹ Occupations are denoted by the US Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system's categories, which combine some Gateways. Demand levels are for a 12-month period.

² High (\$78,000+); Upper middle (\$70,000–\$78,000); Middle (\$42,000–\$70,000).

³ High (25,000+); Medium high (10,000–25,000); Medium (5,000–10,000); Medium low (1,000–5,000); Low (0–1,000).

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data; Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey Global Institute data

About 77 Gateways are particularly effective at unlocking job progressions.

Full list of Gateway occupations¹

Gateway roles (ordered from highest to lowest count of inward transitions from Origins)	Proportion of transitions from Origins	Risk profile	Wage category ²	Demand category ³
		High Low N/A	High Upper middle Middle	High Low N/A
Agents and business managers of artists, performers, and athletes	0.48			
Electrical engineering technicians	0.35			
Electrical and electronics repairers ⁴	0.34			
Criminal investigators and special agents	0.41			
Film and video editors	0.49			
Municipal fire-fighting and prevention supervisors	0.34			
Environmental compliance inspectors	0.41			
Sound engineering technicians	0.51			
Compliance officers	0.35			
Multimedia artists and animators	0.53			
Intelligence analysts	0.37			
Electro-mechanical technicians	0.40			
Tax examiners and collectors and revenue agents	0.59			
Loss-prevention managers	0.53			
Telecommunications engineering specialists	0.36			
Computer numerically controlled machine tool engineers ⁵	0.45			
Surgical assistants	0.55			
Security managers	0.39			
Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators	0.43			
Nuclear equipment operation technicians	0.48			
Logistics engineers	0.47			
Regulatory affairs specialists	0.36			
Gaming managers	0.53			
Customs brokers	0.36			

¹ Occupations are denoted by the US Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system’s categories, which combine some Gateways.

Demand levels are for a 12-month period.

² High (\$78,000+); Upper middle (\$70,000–\$78,000); Middle (\$42,000–\$70,000).

³ High (25,000+); Medium high (10,000–25,000); Medium (5,000–10,000); Medium low (1,000–5,000); Low (0–1,000).

⁴ Commercial and industrial equipment.

⁵ Metal and plastic.

Source: McKinsey analysis using Emsi data; Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey Global Institute data

The 77 Gateway occupations fall into nine families of work.

x Number of occupations

2 Mechanical installation and repair professionals

Electrical and electronics repairers, commercial and industrial equipment
Medical-equipment repairers

5 Community service professionals

First-line supervisors of police and detectives
Municipal fire fighting and prevention supervisors
Municipal firefighters
Criminal investigators and special agents
Intelligence analysts

8 Creatives and arts managers

Art directors
Multimedia artists and animators
Fashion designers
Interior designers
Designers, all other
Producers
Sound-engineering technicians
Film and video editors

9 Health aides, technicians, and wellness professionals

Dental hygienists
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians
Diagnostic medical sonographers
Radiologic technologists
Surgical technologists
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses
Health technologists and technicians, all other
Radiologic technicians
Surgical assistants

24 Business or legal professionals

Agents and business managers of artists, performers, and athletes
Purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products
Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators
Claims examiners, property and casualty insurance
Insurance adjusters, examiners, and investigators
Compliance officers
Environmental-compliance inspectors
Equal-opportunity representatives and officers
Regulatory affairs specialists
Human resources specialists
Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists
Training and development specialists
Business operations specialists, all other
Security management specialists
Customs brokers
Credit analysts
Insurance underwriters
Loan officers
Tax examiners and collectors; revenue agents
Paralegals and legal assistants
Sales agents, financial services
Sales representatives, services, all other
Real-estate sales agents

2 Production workers

First-line supervisors of production and operating workers
Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic

14 STEM professionals

Logisticians
Logistics engineers
Telecommunications engineering specialists
Computer user-support specialists
Software quality-assurance engineers and testers
Document management specialists
Architectural drafters
Electronics engineering technicians
Electrical engineering technicians
Electro-mechanical technicians
Mechanical engineering technicians
Manufacturing production technicians
Nuclear equipment operation technicians
Environmental science and protection technicians, including health

11 Managers

Financial managers, branch or department
Storage and distribution managers
Human resources managers
Food service managers
Gaming managers
Lodging managers
Property, real estate, and community association managers
Social and community service managers
Managers, all other
Security managers
Loss prevention managers

2 Health professionals

Respiratory therapists
Registered nurses

The concentration of Gateways varies by industry.

Relative concentration of occupations by industry 2020

High Low

McKinsey Global Institute category	Gateway occupation title	Accommodation and food services	Administrative and waste management	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	Education	Construction	Finance and insurance	Government	Healthcare and social assistance	Information
Business or legal professionals	Human resources specialists		High							
	Training and development specialists	Medium	Medium						High	
	Paralegals and legal assistants							Low		
	Advertising sales agents									Medium
	Sales representatives, services, all other	Medium	High	Medium						Medium
	Business operations specialists, all other		Medium					High	High	Medium
	Real estate sales agents							Low		
	Purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products							Medium		
	Loan officers							Medium		
	Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists			Medium				High	High	Medium
	Credit analysts			Medium				Low		Medium
	Insurance underwriters	Medium	High	Medium				High	High	Medium
	Agents and business managers of artists, performers, and athletes				High					
	Compliance officers							High	Medium	Low
	Tax examiners and collectors and revenue agents							High	Low	
Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators							High	Low		
Sales agents, financial services	Medium	Medium	Medium			Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	
Community service professionals	First-line supervisors of police and detectives							High		
	Municipal firefighters							High		
	Municipal firefighting and prevention supervisors							High		
	Criminal investigators and special agents							High		
	Intelligence analysts							High		
Creatives and arts managers	Producers			Medium						High
	Art directors			Medium						High
	Designers, all other			High						Low
	Interior designers									
	Fashion designers			Medium						High
	Film and video editors									High
	Sound engineering technicians	Medium		Medium						High
	Multimedia artists and animators									High
Health aides, technicians, and wellness professionals	Dental hygienists								High	
	Radiologic technologists								High	
	Surgical technologists								High	

Source: Mckinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

The concentration of Gateways varies by industry.

Relative concentration of occupations by industry 2020

High  Low

McKinsey Global Institute category	Gateway occupation title	Management	Manufacturing	Mining	Other services ¹	Professional services	Real estate	Retail trade	Utilities, transport, and warehousing	Wholesale trade
Business or legal professionals	Human resources specialists									
	Training and development specialists									
	Paralegals and legal assistants									
	Advertising sales agents									
	Sales representatives, services, all other									
	Business operations specialists, all other									
	Real estate sales agents									
	Purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products									
	Loan officers									
	Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists									
	Credit analysts									
	Insurance underwriters									
	Agents and business managers of artists, performers, and athletes									
	Compliance officers									
	Tax examiners and collectors and revenue agents									
	Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators									
Sales agents, financial services										
Community service professionals	First-line supervisors of police and detectives									
	Municipal firefighters									
	Municipal firefighting and prevention supervisors									
	Criminal investigators and special agents									
	Intelligence analysts									
Creatives and arts managers	Producers									
	Art directors									
	Designers, all other									
	Interior designers									
	Fashion designers									
	Film and video editors									
	Sound engineering technicians									
Multimedia artists and animators										
Health aides, technicians, and wellness professionals	Dental hygienists									
	Radiologic technologists									
	Surgical technologists									

¹ Excludes public administration.

Source: McKinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

The concentration of Gateways varies by industry.

Relative concentration of occupations by industry 2020

High Low

McKinsey Global Institute category	Gateway occupation title	Accommodation and food services	Administrative and waste management	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	Education	Construction	Finance and insurance	Government	Healthcare and social assistance	Information
Health aides, technicians, and wellness professionals (continued)	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses								High	
	Health technologists and technicians, all other								High	
	Cardiovascular technologists and technicians								High	
	Diagnostic medical sonographers								High	
Health professionals	Respiratory therapists								High	
	Registered nurses								High	
Managers	Food-service managers	High								
	Property, real estate, and community association managers									
	Financial managers, branch or department									
	Managers, all other			High				High		
	Human resources managers							High	High	
	Social and community service managers								High	
	Lodging managers	High								
	Gaming managers	High			High					
Mechanical installation and repair workers	Storage and distribution managers									
	Medical equipment repairers								High	
Production workers	Electrical and electronics repairers, commercial and industrial equipment							High		
	First-line supervisors of production and operating workers									
STEM ² professionals	Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic									
	Computer-user support specialists		High							High
	Software quality assurance engineers and testers							High		High
	Document-management specialists							High		High
	Logisticians							High		
	Environmental science and protection technicians, including health							High		
	Mechanical engineering technicians									
	Electro-mechanical technicians									
	Electronics engineering technicians									
	Architectural drafters									
STEM ² professionals	Telecommunications engineering specialists		High							High
	Nuclear equipment operation technicians		High							
	Electrical engineering technicians							High		
	Manufacturing production technicians							High		

² Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Source: Mckinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

The concentration of Gateways varies by industry.

Relative concentration of occupations by industry 2020

High Low

McKinsey Global Institute category	Gateway occupation title	Management	Manufacturing	Mining	Other services ¹	Professional services	Real estate	Retail trade	Utilities, transport, and warehousing	Wholesale trade
Health aides, technicians, and wellness professionals (continued)	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses									
	Health technologists and technicians, all other									
	Cardiovascular technologists and technicians									
	Diagnostic medical sonographers									
Health professionals	Respiratory therapists									
	Registered nurses									
Managers	Food-service managers									
	Property, real estate, and community association managers						High			
	Financial managers, branch or department									
	Managers, all other	Medium	Medium		Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Human resources managers	Medium			Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Social and community service managers				Medium					
	Lodging managers									
	Gaming managers									
	Storage and distribution managers	Medium	Medium		Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Mechanical installation and repair workers	Medical equipment repairers				Medium					
	Electrical and electronics repairers, commercial and industrial equipment		High		Medium				High	Medium
Production workers	First-line supervisors of production and operating workers		High							
	Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic		High							
STEM ² professionals	Computer-user support specialists	Medium				High				
	Software quality assurance engineers and testers	Medium				High			High	
	Document-management specialists	Medium				High			High	
	Logisticians	Medium	High			High			High	Medium
	Environmental science and protection technicians, including health					High				
	Mechanical engineering technicians		High			High				
	Electro-mechanical technicians		High			High				
	Electronics engineering technicians		High			High				
	Architectural drafters		Medium			High				
	Telecommunications engineering specialists	Medium				High				
	Nuclear equipment operation technicians					High			High	
	Electrical engineering technicians		High			High			Medium	
	Manufacturing production technicians		High	Medium		High				

¹ Excludes public administration.

² Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Source: McKinsey analysis using McKinsey Global Institute data

About the Rework America Alliance

The Rework America Alliance, a Markle Foundation initiative, is working to help millions of unemployed workers from low-wage roles move into better jobs. A unique partnership of civil rights organizations, nonprofits, private-sector employers, labor unions, educators, and others, the Alliance formed to respond to the employment crisis created by the pandemic, which brought into stark relief the inequities in the labor market. The Alliance is focused on opening opportunities for workers who have built capabilities through experience but do not have a bachelor’s degree—particularly people of color without four-year degrees, as they have been disproportionately affected by the current economic crisis.

Rework America Alliance Partners

AFL-CIO	Goodwill Industries International	Patrick J. McGovern Foundation
African American Mayors Association	Google	Per Scholas
Arizona State University	H-CAP (Healthcare Career Advancement Program)	Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Rural LISC)
Boeing	IBM	SkillsEngine
Brighthive	Ivy Tech Community College	Strada Education Network
Burning Glass Technologies	Markle Foundation	UnidosUS
Center for Employment Opportunities	McKinsey & Company	Walmart
Cognizant U.S. Foundation	Microsoft	Wipfli LLP
Colorado Community College System	NAACP	Workday
CVS Health	North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU)	Workrise
edX	National Partnership for Women & Families	Zurich North America
Emily Griffith Technical College	National Urban League	
Emsi	Opportunity@Work	
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta	PAIRIN	
Futuro Health		

