

## Tri-Cities Region Reskilling and Upskilling in the Post-COVID-19 Economy

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a deep recession in Washington with a sharp rise in unemployment. A significant percentage of jobs lost may never return. African American and Latinx workers, young adults, and those without postsecondary education are being hit hardest by the Covid-19 recession. Many Tri-Cities workers will need to **reskill** for jobs in new industries and focus on those with growth potential and opportunities to **upskill** for career advancement. The availability of seamless, well-coordinated credential pathways is critical to helping them successfully navigate this transition.




### RESKILLING:

Learning a new set of skills or obtaining a credential in a separate field, with the goal of transitioning to a new job or different industry.

### UPSKILLING:

Acquiring additional skills or new credentials for advancing to a more responsible position and higher wages in the same general line of work.

### EXAMPLES OF CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS IN THE TRI-CITIES AREA FOR LIVING-WAGE, HIGH-DEMAND JOBS<sup>1</sup>

Occupational Fields	RESKILLING			UPSKILLING	
	Short-Term Programs	Entry-Level Position		Additional credentials for Career Advancement	Next-Step Occupations
 Medical Records & Health Information	1-Year Certificate (Columbia Basin College)	Medical Records Clerk (Median Hourly wage- \$15.94)	→	2-Year Associate Degree (Columbia Basin College)	Health Information Tech. / Medical Coder (Median Hourly wage- \$21.25)  Medical Records Coding Supervisor (Median Hourly Wage- \$31.08)
 Computer & Information Tech.	Short-Term Certificate – Two Quarters  1-Year Certificate (Columbia Basin College)	Computer Support Specialist (Median Hourly wage- \$19.23)	→	2-Year Associate Degree Program  Bachelor's Degree (BAS) (Columbia Basin College)	Computer Network Support Specialist (Median Hourly Wage- \$23.56)  Network Administrator / Systems Analyst (Median Hourly Wage-\$33.65)
 Accounting	1-Year Certificate (Columbia Basin College)	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (Median Hourly wage- \$16.60)	→	2-Year Associate Degree (Columbia Basin College)  Bachelor's Degree Pathway (Washington State University Tri-Cities)	Payroll Accountant (Median Hourly Wage- \$21.73)  Accountant (Median Hourly Wage- \$25.49)

### Strategies to Support Reskilling and Upskilling for a Sustained and Equitable Recovery

#### Short-Term:

- Increase awareness of short-term, non-degree programs that provide qualifications for living-wage jobs.
- Ensure broad access to online courses that offer flexibility and alternatives to in-person classes.
- Provide support services to students who face barriers to attending and persisting in postsecondary programs.
- Expand the use of Academic Credit for Prior Learning for certificate and degree programs.

#### Long-Term:

- Continue to develop short-term certificate programs and credential pathways that are stackable toward degrees.

<sup>1</sup> The living Wage for a family of 2 adults (1 working) and 1 child is \$21.99 (Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator, accessed Oct. 2020, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>). In-demand jobs and wage data were determined using labor market analytics from Economic Modeling Specialists International (Emsi) and Burning Glass Technologies.