

Pierce County

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 Pierce County 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 PIERCE COUNTY AREA FOR LIVING-WAGE, HIGH-DEMAND JOBS¹

Occupational Fields	RESKILLING			UPSKILLING	
	Short-Term Programs	Entry-Level Position		Additional credentials for Career Advancement	Next-Step Occupations
Computer & Information Tech 	Technical Support Certificate (20 credits) (Tacoma Community College)	Comp. Support Specialist (Median Hourly wage- \$20.03)	→	Bachelor's Degree - IT Networking Information Systems & Technology (Tacoma Community College)	Computer Systems Analyst (Median Hourly Wage- \$34.86)
	Associate Degree - Computer Networking Systems Technician (6 Quarters) (Bates Technical College)	Network Systems Administrator (Median Hourly wage- \$31.25)		Bachelor's Degree - Information Technology (UW-Tacoma)	Computer Systems Engineer/Architect (Median Hourly Wage- \$44.40)
Engineering 	Associate Degree - Civil and Environmental Engineering (Bates Technical College)	Civil Engineering Technician (Median Hourly wage- \$22.60)	→	Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering (Saint Martin's University)	Civil Engineer (Median Hourly Wage- \$40.32)
				Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering (UW-Seattle)	
Nursing 	Nursing Assistant Certified (5-week program) (Bates Technical College)	Certified Nursing Assistant (Median Hourly wage- \$16.95)	→	Associate in Nursing (Bates Technical College)	Licensed Practical Nurse (Median Hourly wage- \$21.37)
				LPN to RN Program (Pierce College)	Registered Nurse (Median Hourly wage- \$35.55)
				Bachelor of Science in Nursing (UW-Tacoma)	

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.

¹ The living Wage for a family of 2 adults (1 working) and 1 child in Pierce County is \$28.86 (Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator, <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.