

## Thurston 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 Thurston 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 THURSTON COUNTY 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
 <b>Computer &amp; Information Tech</b>	Short-Term Certificate (Two Quarters) Computer Support 1  South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC)	Computer Support Specialist (Median Hourly wage- \$27.52)	→	2-Year Associate Degree Information Systems (SPSCC)  Bachelor's Degree (BAS) Information Technology (Centralia College)	Computer Network Support Specialist (Median Hourly Wage- \$37.48)  Software Developer (Median Hourly Wage-\$46.20)
 <b>Advanced Manufacturing</b>	Short-Term Certificate (2 Quarters) Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Technician  South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC)	Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator (Median Hourly wage- \$14.95)	→	Associate Degree – Advanced Manufacturing (6 Quarters) (SPSCC)  Bachelor's Degree Mechanical Engineering (Saint Martin's University)	CNC Technician/Programmer (Median Hourly Wage- \$26.18)  CNC Manufacturing Engineer (Median Hourly Wage-\$39.01)  Mechanical Engineer (Median Hourly Wage-\$40.41)
 <b>Nursing</b>	Short-Term Certificate (1 Quarter) Certified Nurse Assistant (CAN) South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC)	Certified Nursing Assistant (Median Hourly wage- \$15.21)	→	Associate in Nursing South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC)  Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) UW-Tacoma	Licensed Practical Nurse (Median Hourly wage- \$27.79)  Registered Nurse (Median Hourly wage- \$37.81)

#### 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 in Thurston County is \$27.27 (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.