

## Most Stimulus Jobs Require College Experience

Study finds few jobs for high school dropouts

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by *Jamaal Abdul-Alim*

A little more than half of the 3.7 million jobs expected to be created by the new economic stimulus package will require some type of post-secondary education or training, according to a new study - the results of which provide ammunition for both proponents and critics of the movement to get more young people to attend college.

The analysis - done by Anthony Carnevale, director of the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University - estimates that 54 percent of the jobs created by the stimulus plan will require some college experience. Of the 46 percent of the jobs that don't require any college, high school dropouts will be eligible for only about one-fourth, the study found.

Jeff Strohl, a co-author of the study and research director at the center, acknowledged that the percentage of jobs that will go to those with more than a high school diploma is not much higher than the percentage of jobs for those without post-secondary experience. Nevertheless, Strohl said, the data clearly show that those with some post-secondary education still will have an edge.

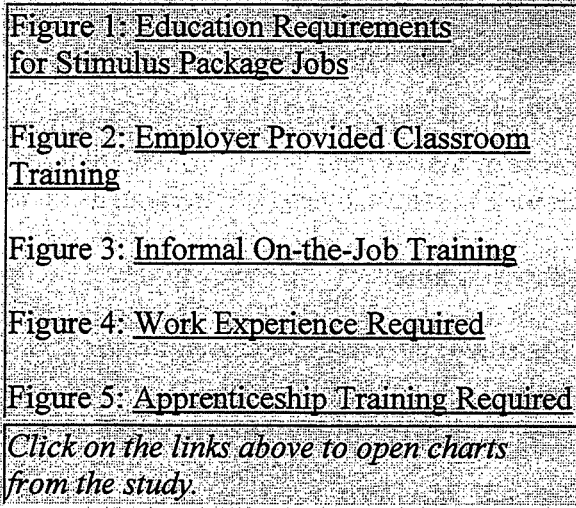
"The numbers show that more than half require post-secondary education," he said.

Even among the jobs requiring only a high school diploma, one-third will require six months to more than four years of on-the-job training, and two-thirds will require work experience of six months to more than eight years, the study says.

"To use that high school degree to obtain work in the modernizing economy requires commitments to classroom training and informal on-the-job training," Strohl said. "A high school diploma by itself" won't necessarily be enough.

Workforce development officials say it won't be easy to fill all the stimulus-created jobs.

"Given the unemployment rate, I think in the short term, there will be some people available to fill those jobs, because we've had some tremendous dislocation in the past



several months," said Bill Villano, incoming treasurer of the National Association of Workforce Boards. "In the longer term, though, I think it's going to present a challenge, because [there are] a lot of individuals who lack a degree and also have some academic issues. It's going to take a while to bring people up to speed academically or skill-wise to be able to take these jobs."

Because of the shortcomings among much of the workforce, those in workforce development say the country will need more investment in career and technical training and workforce development programs.

"One of the things that's important to remember with on-the-job training and employer training is that's great if I'm a big company like Caterpillar that can afford the training," said Thomas Holdsworth, a spokesman for SkillsUSA, a nonprofit career and technical education association based in Leesburg, Va.

But with the stimulus package, Holdsworth said, small companies are supposed to get a piece of the pie, and "they'll be counting on publicly funded career and technical education that will help get individuals up to speed so they're ready to take the jobs."

### **How Reliable?**

The study, which was prepared for the U.S. departments of education and labor, is being hailed by organizations that are pushing for more students to obtain postsecondary degrees in order to secure their future place in the economy.

Jamie P. Merisotis, president of the Lumina Foundation for Education, cited the study in a recent speech to the American Council on Education. Basing his remarks on an early draft of the report, Merisotis concluded that it shows how "the educational bar already has been raised for those who hope to hold the jobs of tomorrow."

However, not everyone is convinced that such conclusions are supported by facts.

Among the critics is George Leef, director of research at the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. Leef said the study has a "questionable appearance of exactitude."

He questioned, for example, how the Georgetown researchers knew that 691,095 jobs will be created that require a bachelor's degree.

"Just what are those jobs that couldn't be done by a person who had only 'some college' or has an associate's degree, for instance?" Leef asked.

Leef also said the conclusion that "demand for post-secondary degrees will continue to be high" is unwarranted. "This is only a very small slice of the labor force, but even within that slice, a majority of the jobs do not call for education at the level of the B.A.," Leef said. "Most of the work can apparently be done by people with a high school education or

less, or high school plus some vocational training, which doesn't necessarily have to take place in a college setting.

"I don't see that these figures do anything to support the common notion that the nation needs to put more people through college."

Strohl, the co-author of the study, said he was able to get the figures on what kinds of jobs require what kinds of degrees by examining Standard Occupational Classification and occupational data available on the Occupational Information Network O\*NET, an online database of occupational information being developed under the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration through a grant to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission.

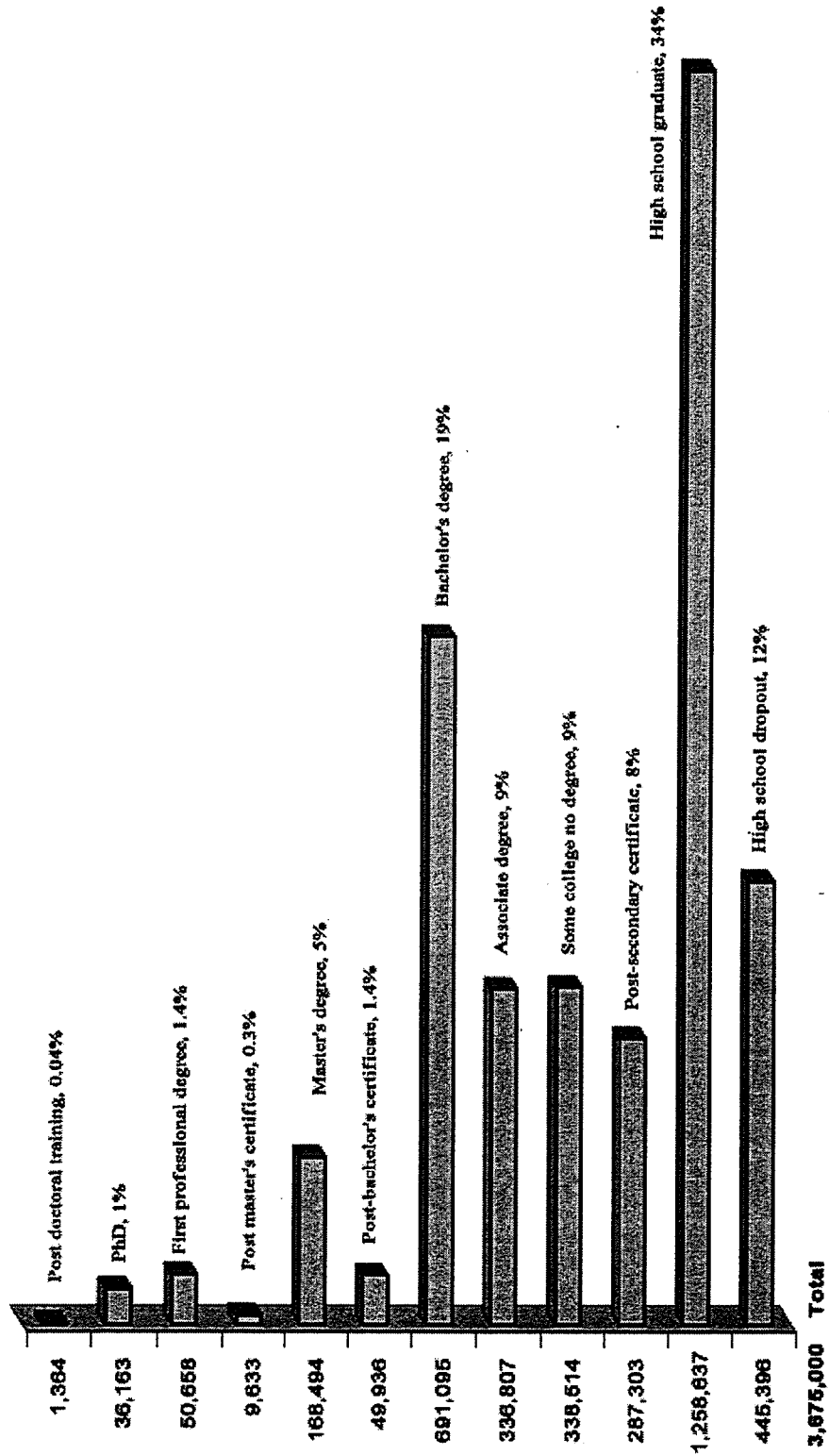
"You can tell with a fair amount of specificity a job that requires a bachelor's degree versus a job that does not require a bachelor's degree," Strohl said.

He also said it is important to consider trends in the overall economy, not just stimulus-created jobs. "If you look at the trends in the normal economy, there's been a continuing need for post-secondary degrees," Strohl said. "The real point is the need for post-secondary degrees has been continuing to grow at a much quicker rate than the need for high school degrees."

Contact: <http://cew.georgetown.edu/index.html>, (202) 687-0880; speech by Merisotis, [http://www.luminafoundation.org/about\\_us/president/speeches/2009-02-10.html](http://www.luminafoundation.org/about_us/president/speeches/2009-02-10.html)



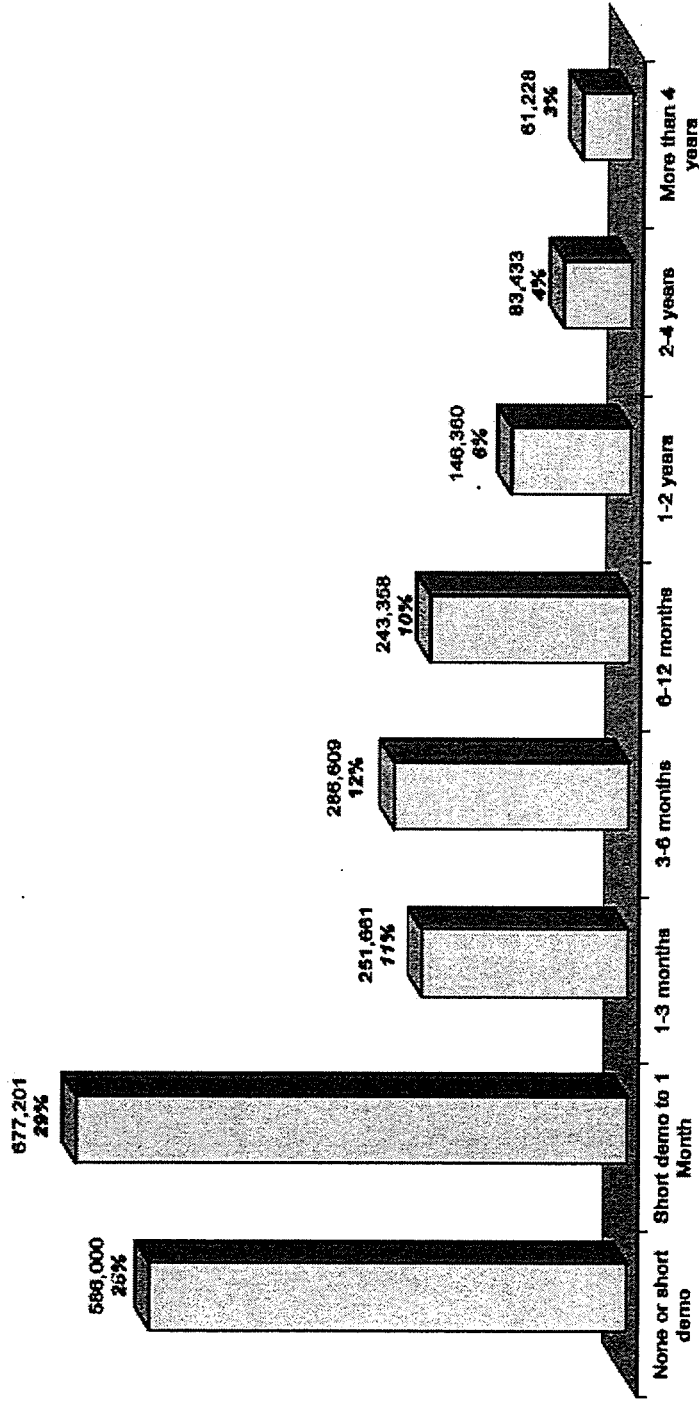
**Figure 1: Education Requirements for Stimulus Package Jobs**



**Source: Carnevale, Strohl and Smith's analysis of O\*NET Education and Training data by Occupation**



**Figure 2: Employer-Provided Classroom Training Required for non-College Jobs in the Stimulus Package\***

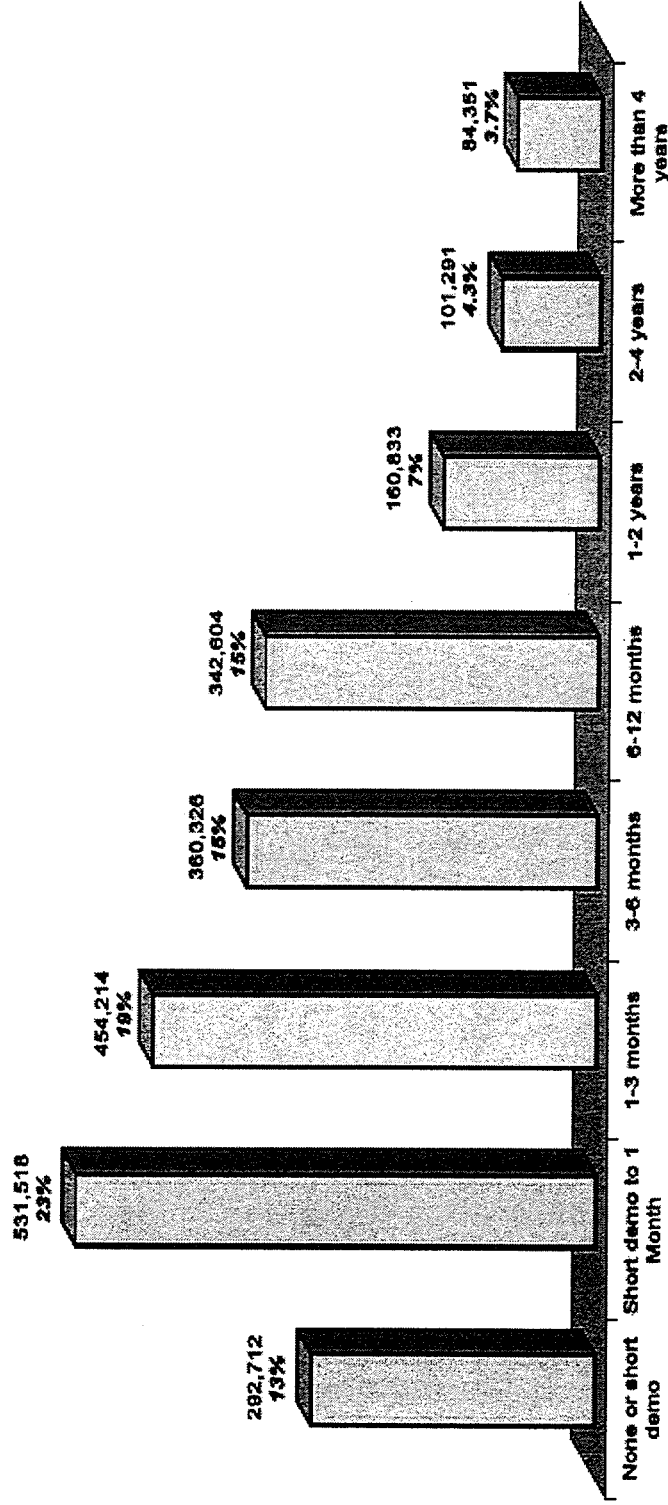


\*Non-college jobs include high school dropouts, high school graduates, post-secondary certificates and some college but no degree.

Source: Carnevale, Strohl and Smith's analysis of O\*NET Education and Training data by Occupation



**Figure 3: Informal On-the-Job Training Required for non-College Jobs in the Stimulus Package\***

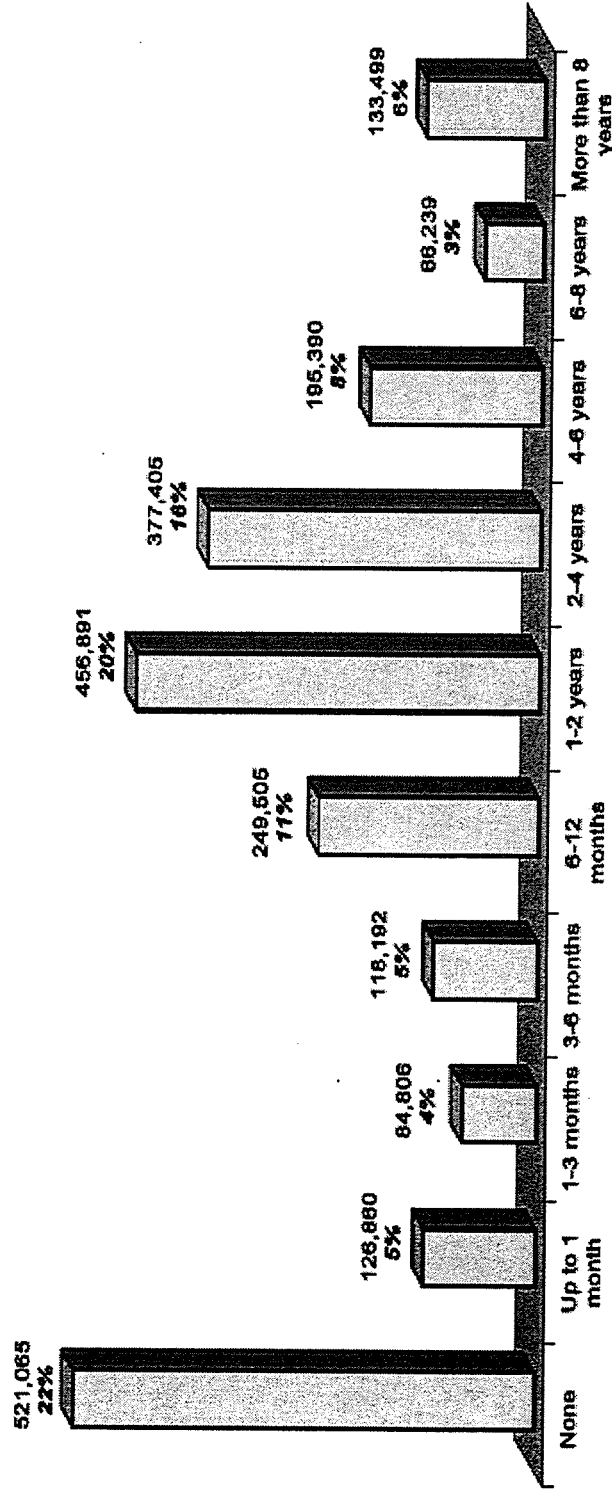


**\*Non-college jobs include high school dropouts, high school graduates, post-secondary certificates and some college but no degree.**

**Source: Carnevale, Strohl and Smith's analysis of O\*NET Education and Training data by Occupation**



**Figure 4: Work Experience Required for non-College Jobs in the Stimulus Package\***

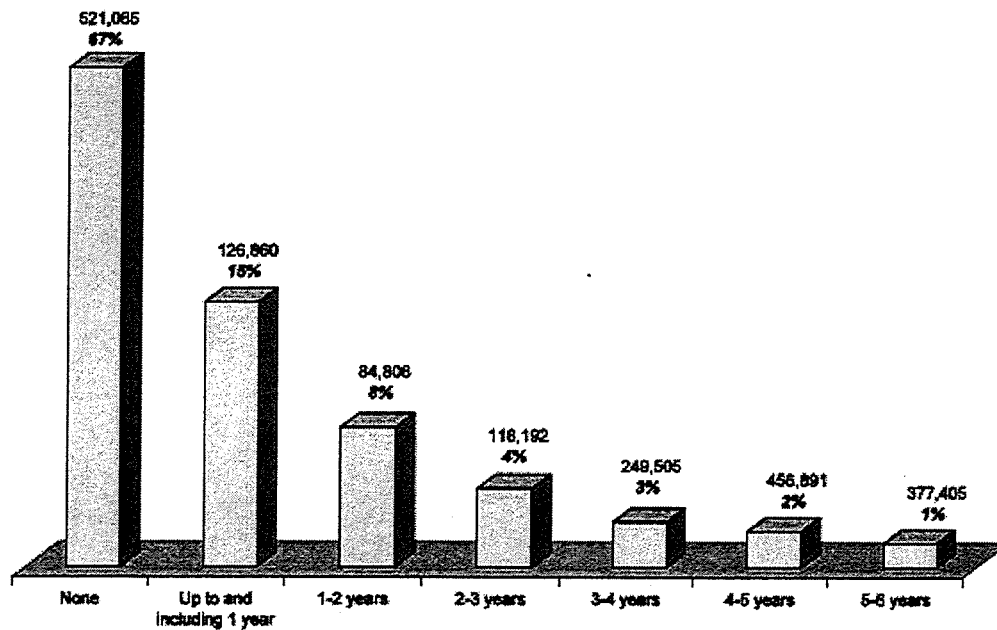


\*Non-college jobs include high school dropouts, high school graduates, post-secondary certificates and some college but no degree.

Source: Carnevale, Strohl and Smith's analysis of O\*NET Education and Training data by Occupation



**Figure 5: Apprenticeship Training Required for non-College Jobs in the Stimulus Package\***



\*Non-college jobs include high school dropouts, high school graduates, post-secondary certificates and some college but no degree.

Apprenticeships presented in this chart are those with a registered US Department of Labor program that provide a certificate of completion. They represent approximately 25-50% of all Apprenticeship programs in the United States. (This number is a rough estimate provided by industry experts. Estimates of unregistered apprenticeship programs are difficult to obtain).

Source: Carnevale, Strohl and Smith's analysis of O\*NET Education and Training data by Occupation

