

## Applegate's Update

### Myth Busting: The Good Jobs Are Back for College Graduates

Since the Great Recession, and even through much of the recovery, it is not uncommon to hear people say that the economy is providing only low wage jobs and that the need for college graduates has lessened. A recent study by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, [Good Jobs Are Back](#), has blown those myths apart much like the television show "Myth Busters" often used explosive devices to destroy other types of commonly held myths. The economy is creating good jobs and they are almost all going to college graduates.

The Georgetown University Center (one of the premier college/workforce research centers in the country) shows that the economy has created 6.6 million jobs since the recovery from the recession began. Of those 2.9 million very good jobs (defined as paying above \$53,000 dollars per year largely full time and with benefits – a salary well above the national average). So first myth blown, nearly half of the jobs created are good jobs. Of those 2.9 million good jobs 2.8 million have been filled by people with bachelor degrees or higher. There are more of these jobs and jobs generally available to people with a college degree than before the recession began. Second myth blown, the market is paying a high premium for the skills and talents of college graduates in a fast changing, talent-driven economy.

While middle wage job numbers have not fully recovered from the recession (those in the \$32,000 to \$53,000 wage range) still almost all of those jobs and the rest of the "good jobs" are going to people with some form of college education (e.g. associate degrees). This powerful study also shows two other interesting trends. Low wage jobs are growing and have recovered to pre-recession levels. However, those with only a high school credential or less have lost jobs in even this category. In short, economic trends since the recovery have made it truer that a high school credential by itself almost guarantees either no job or a low wage job.

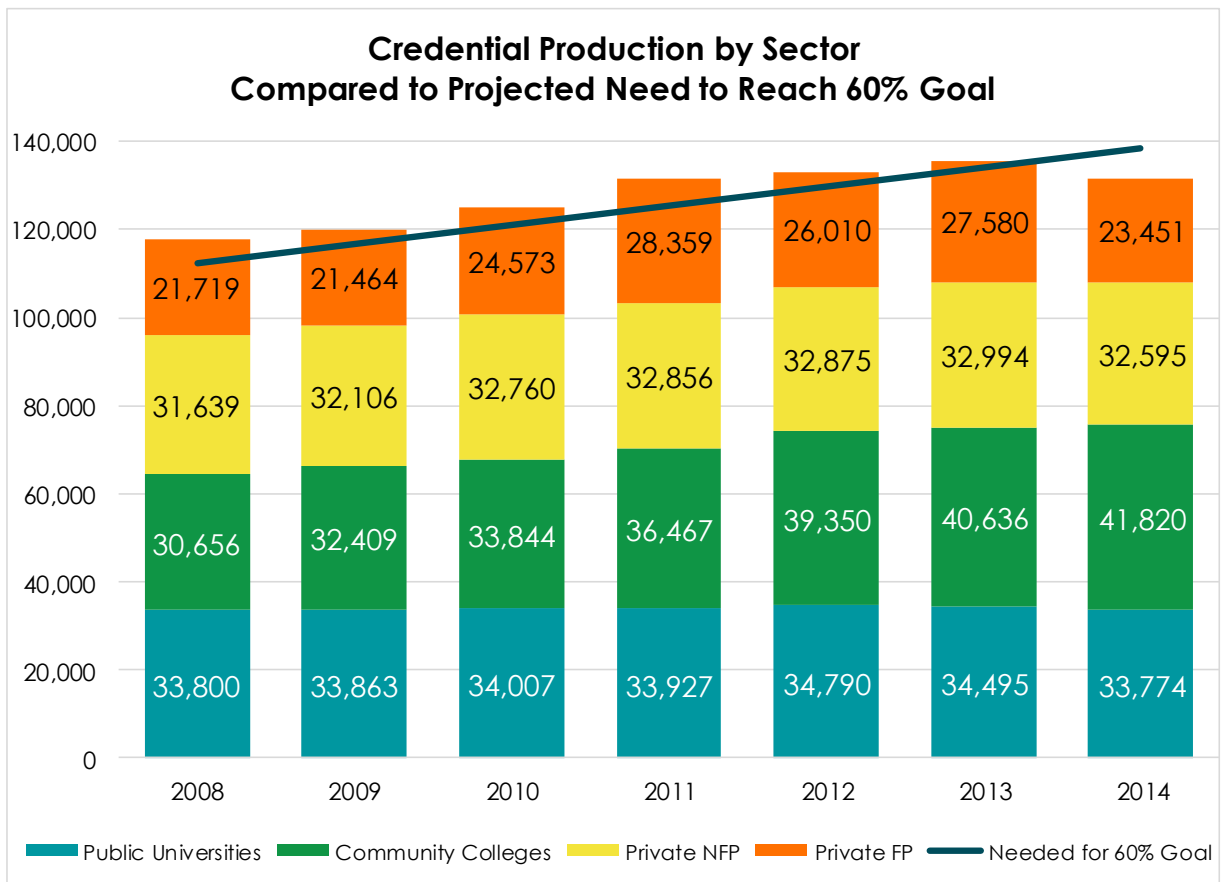
This promising news for college graduates came out shortly before a Nobel Prize in Economic Science was awarded for [research](#) that, among other things, uncovered a devastating relatively new demographic trend in the U.S. that had until now gone undetected. The mortality rates for middle-aged white Americans with low levels of education (high school or below) are rising at an unprecedented rate. The vast majority of this increase is attributable to drug and alcohol addiction and suicide. While the reasons for this terrible trend are being explored in depth, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest the loss of hope and economic opportunity for those with low education levels who are being left behind in this economy is a cause worthy of attention.

We must all support efforts to explode these pernicious myths about the value of college that might discourage students and families from finding a path to a college credential or detract from our motivations to scale up efforts to make that credential available to more people, especially our most vulnerable populations. This is, it turns out, literally life-saving work. I hope all of the adult learners, younger students and their

parents who read this will redouble their efforts to earn that college degree. It is very much worth your sacrifice. I thank all of the dedicated professionals who are working to make that degree more accessible to all of our fellow citizens and dedicated to helping Illinois succeed in implementing the [Public Agenda for College and Career Success](#). I hope this helps you double down on your life saving work. And for our state leaders, I urge you, as we resolve our budget crises, to invest in higher education as one of the most powerful policy strategies to improve lives and our state. It should be said again that lives, literally, depend on our success.

Finally, I encourage all of us to stand up the next time you hear someone say “Well, some people just aren’t college material.” Help them understand that a concerned society should hope that more people want to be college material, because being educated and prepared for the workforce means more economic security and more opportunities for a longer, happier life. This is the truth. Data continues to bear this out. So, next week when we are at our Thanksgiving tables counting our blessings, be sure to include: **the opportunity to be educated.**

**60 x 2025**



Source: IBHE Data Points, 2015

IBHE is tracking Illinois’s progress toward the **60 x 2025 goal** (60% of the adult population holding a credential of value by the year 2025). This chart represents credentials awarded by sector each year since the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* was adopted. For more information, click [here](#).



On November 16, the **Midwestern Higher Education Compact** (MHEC) acknowledged Illinois as an official **Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement** (M-SARA) member state during the organization's annual commission meeting. **Sen. Pat McGuire**, also a MHEC commissioner, and **Rep. Bob Pritchard** sponsored the legislation authorizing the state's involvement in M-SARA. The **Illinois Board of Higher Education** serves as the M-SARA portal agency. IBHE's **Dr. Dan Cullen**, deputy director for Academic Affairs, and **Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze**, assistant director for Academic Affairs, oversaw the approval process with MHEC. Illinois was approved as [the ninth M-SARA state on July 31](#).



L to R: Larry Isaak, MHEC president; Jenny Parks, M-SARA director; Suzanne Morris, Illinois Community College Board member and MHEC commission chair; James Applegate, IBHE executive director; Rep. Kelly Burke, D-36; and Dr. Addison Woodward, IBHE Board member.

## Increasing Adult Degree Completion

IBHE was invited to attend a convening of leaders from national associations for massage therapy businesses to discuss human trafficking in the massage therapy industry. Held in Washington, DC, the meeting was conducted by **Polaris**, a non-governmental organization leading the global fight to eradicate modern slavery by helping trafficking survivors restore their freedom, preventing more victims, and leveraging data and technology to pursue traffickers wherever they operate. IBHE, represented by **Adam Campbell**, assistant director in the **Private Business and Vocational Schools** unit of Academic Affairs, was the only government regulatory body in attendance. Campbell was invited to discuss IBHE's experience in monitoring the emergence of fraudulent activity taking place in massage therapy schools and the use of legitimate postsecondary credentials being used to cover illegitimate activity. Polaris estimates the existence of 9,000 illicit massage businesses exploiting approximately 27,000 trafficked victims nationally. IBHE's participation at the convening brought further attention to how states should address monitoring the schools providing educational credentials that are being used to facilitate human trafficking. More information [can be found here](#).

## Increasing Affordability

The School Code has been amended to include additional instruction in consumer education. Section 27-12.1 expanded instruction to include consumer debt, **higher education student loans**, and identity-theft security. Resources are available from the **Illinois Attorney General Office** and the **Illinois Student Assistance Commission** on these topics. The following links will take you to information related to the new content:

[Illinois General Assembly – School Code](#)

[The Illinois Attorney General's Office](#)

[The Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#)

## People in the News

[Suzanne Morris](#), Illinois Community College Board member, was recognized for her leadership as commission chair of the **Midwestern Higher Education Compact** (MHEC) during the commission's semi-annual meeting held in Chicago, on November 16-17. Ms. Morris's term as chair began last November (2014-15). Previously she served as the Compact's vice chair (2013-14), and a term as treasurer (2012-13). One of four regional higher education compacts in the United States, MHEC is a nonprofit regional organization assisting its 12 member Midwestern states in advancing higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing.



Happy Thanksgiving from IBHE!



**IBHE**

1 North Old State Capitol Plaza • Suite 333 • Springfield, Illinois 62701  
217-782-2551 TTY 888-261-2881