

# SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS FOR ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES IN SLC MEMBER STATES

*A REGIONAL RESOURCE FROM THE SLC*

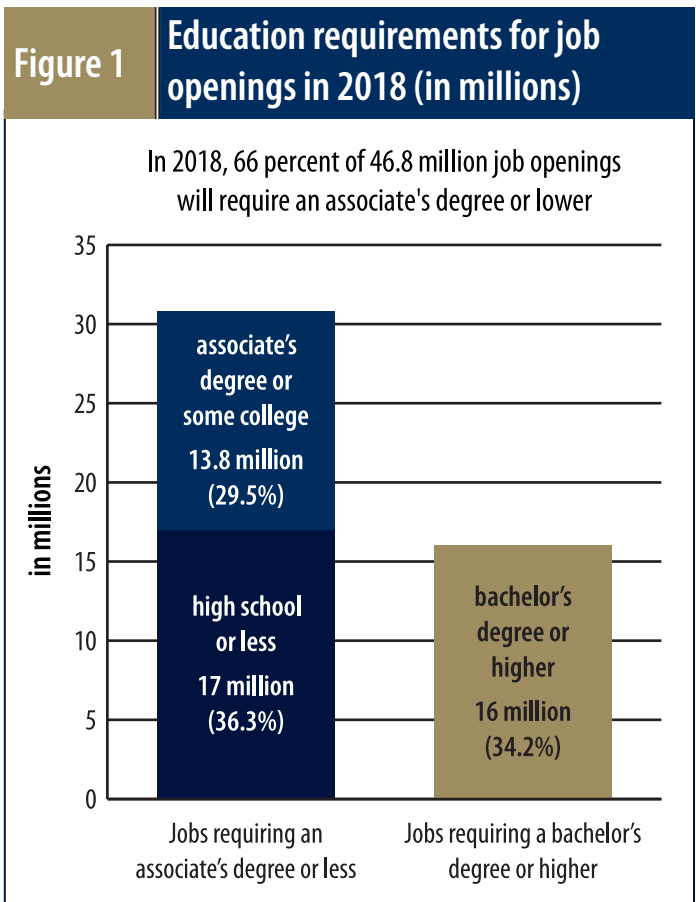
by SLC Policy Analyst Mikko Lindberg

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## Introduction

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United States has maintained a cultural creed that the only path to a middle-class lifestyle is through a four-year bachelor's degree or higher. However, increasing analyses are demonstrating that industries with the highest growth in the next decade will demand 21<sup>st</sup> century skills readily obtainable through a two-year technical education. As early as 2011, based on previous research by Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, a report from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education found that only one-third of the job openings of the current decade will require a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 1).<sup>1,\*</sup> Similarly, a 2013 study by The Brookings Institution found that the education requirements for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) jobs in the current U.S. economy are evenly divided between a bachelor's degree or higher and an associate's degree or lower (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> As it stands, academics and policy think tanks across the education field are calling for a revocation of the cultural presumption that middle-class skills and a middle-class quality of life are obtainable only through a bachelor's degree or higher and the considerable investments of time and money that come with such credentials. Equally, the path to prosper-

\* Estimated state-level educational requirement percentages for SLC member states are provided in Table 1 and visualized in Figure 2.



Source: Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010. <https://georgetown.box.com/s/9pvw2eqcu0x8jz665nxxg> (accessed November 23, 2014).

ous state economies does not lie with high-cost academic credentials but, rather, with practical middle-skill credentials<sup>†</sup> applicable to high-growth industries, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and STEM fields.

## The Case for Career and Technical Education

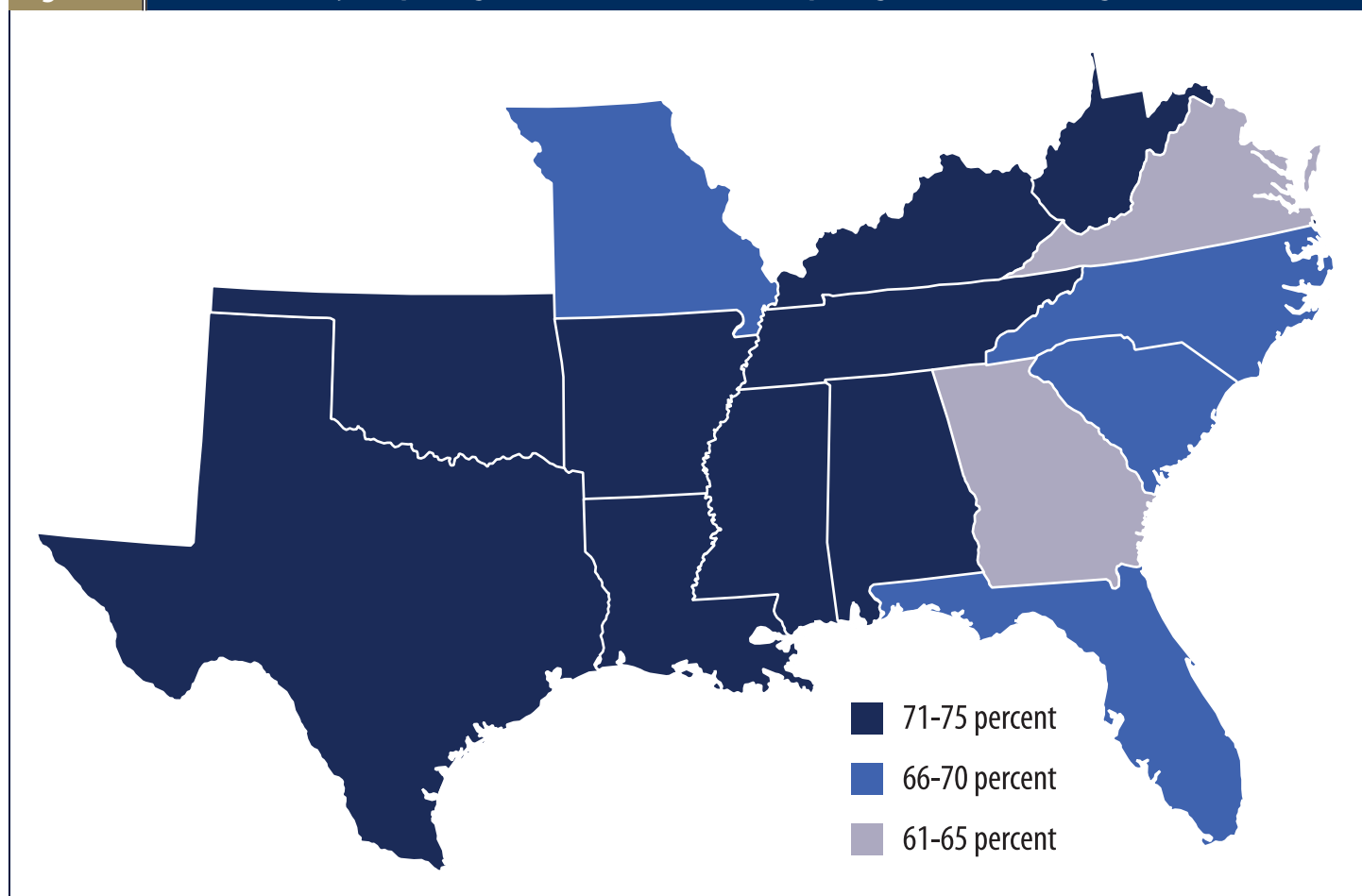
As expanding industries continue to call for solutions to resolve the limited availability of workers with technical skills higher than those of a high school graduate, but less than a four-year college graduate, state governments across the nation are beginning to recognize the returns provided by directing economic development investments into increasing their supply of these “middle-skill workers.” In fact, as part of this growing awareness, the 2014 chair of The Council of State Governments (CSG),

<sup>†</sup> As per the Georgetown University study, middle-skills credentials are defined as “education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor’s degree.”

Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, and the 2014 CSG president, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin of West Virginia, declared *State Pathways to Prosperity* as the initiative they would focus on during their tenure. This leadership initiative involves identifying and developing state programs that support middle-skill training to provide a growing number of workers in the South with the potential for middle-class earnings.

The aforementioned report by Georgetown University found that 80 percent of households with a member holding an associate’s degree were earning middle- or upper-class incomes, as demonstrated by Figure 4. Another report released by Georgetown University in 2012 found that, in 2011, men with an associate’s degree earned salaries of \$49,000, on average, mostly in the business, engineering, information technology, vocational, humanities, allied health, and protective services profes-

**Figure 2** Distribution of job openings in SLC member states requiring an associate’s degree or lower in 2018



**Source:** Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010. <https://georgetown.box.com/s/9pvw2eqcu0x8jz665nxg> (accessed November 23, 2014).

sional fields. Meanwhile, women with an associate's degree earned average salaries of \$35,000, from degrees focused on business and allied health.<sup>3</sup> Table 2 displays the middle-class salaries of the 10 most common professions of associate's degree graduates in 2011.

For the 2013-14 academic year, the national average annual tuition and fees at public, in-district community colleges was \$3,260 and \$8,890 at public, in-state four-year colleges.<sup>4</sup> Even if these costs were to remain constant, the average price of a two-year associate's degree would total \$6,520, while a four-year degree would cost \$35,560, a sizable cost differential. Moreover, tuition and fees do not comprise the full cost of education, which also includes expenditures on books, housing, transportation, parking, and personal expenses, often at least doubling the annual cost of a degree program. Additionally, a two-year degree also

facilitates a quicker entry into the workforce for individuals with limited finances.

Career and technical education (CTE) is a term used to reference the variety of education and training programs that prepare students for middle-skill jobs. Advocates for CTE argue that the practical and hands-on approach of CTE keeps students motivated and interested in the coursework, preventing dropouts due to apathy.<sup>5</sup> In fact, a 2011 cohort study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that four out of five high school graduates who participated in a CTE program and then pursued postsecondary education attained a credential or were still enrolled two years later.<sup>6</sup> This training develops a specialized skilled laborer which, in 2013, was the position that employers in the United States had the most difficulty filling.<sup>7</sup> In September 2014, the most recent data available from the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 252,000

Table 1	Percentage distribution of education requirements among all job openings in SLC member states by 2018						
	Less than high school	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree or higher	Associates's degree or lower (Figure 2)
Alabama	11%	31%	16%	14%	20%	9%	72%
Arkansas	11%	35%	14%	14%	19%	7%	74%
Florida	9%	27%	21%	11%	22%	9%	68%
Georgia	10%	28%	15%	12%	24%	10%	65%
Kentucky	10%	33%	16%	13%	19%	9%	72%
Louisiana	12%	35%	11%	14%	21%	8%	72%
Missouri	9%	30%	15%	13%	23%	9%	67%
Mississippi	12%	31%	19%	13%	18%	7%	75%
North Carolina	10%	27%	19%	12%	23%	9%	68%
Oklahoma	10%	31%	16%	14%	21%	8%	71%
South Carolina	10%	30%	18%	12%	21%	9%	70%
Tennessee	11%	33%	14%	13%	21%	9%	71%
Texas	17%	27%	22%	7%	19%	8%	74%
Virginia	9%	25%	15%	12%	26%	14%	61%
West Virginia	9%	38%	15%	12%	17%	8%	74%
U.S. Total	9%	27%	17%	12%	24%	10%	65%

Source: Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010. <https://georgetown.box.com/s/9pww2eqcu0x8jz665nxg> (accessed November 23, 2014).





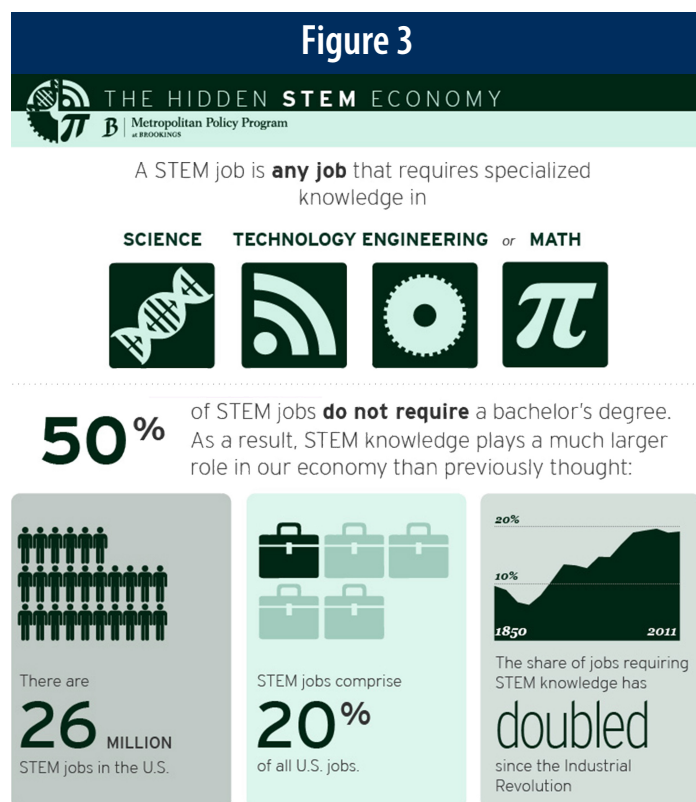
Clinical laboratory technician training, photo courtesy of wistechcolleges via flickr Creative Commons License

jobs in the manufacturing industry and 800,000 jobs in trade, transportation and utilities remained open.<sup>8</sup> Workers with credentials and degrees through CTE are well positioned to fill that void and more likely to earn a solid middle-class wage in the process.

## SLC States Act, React and Adapt

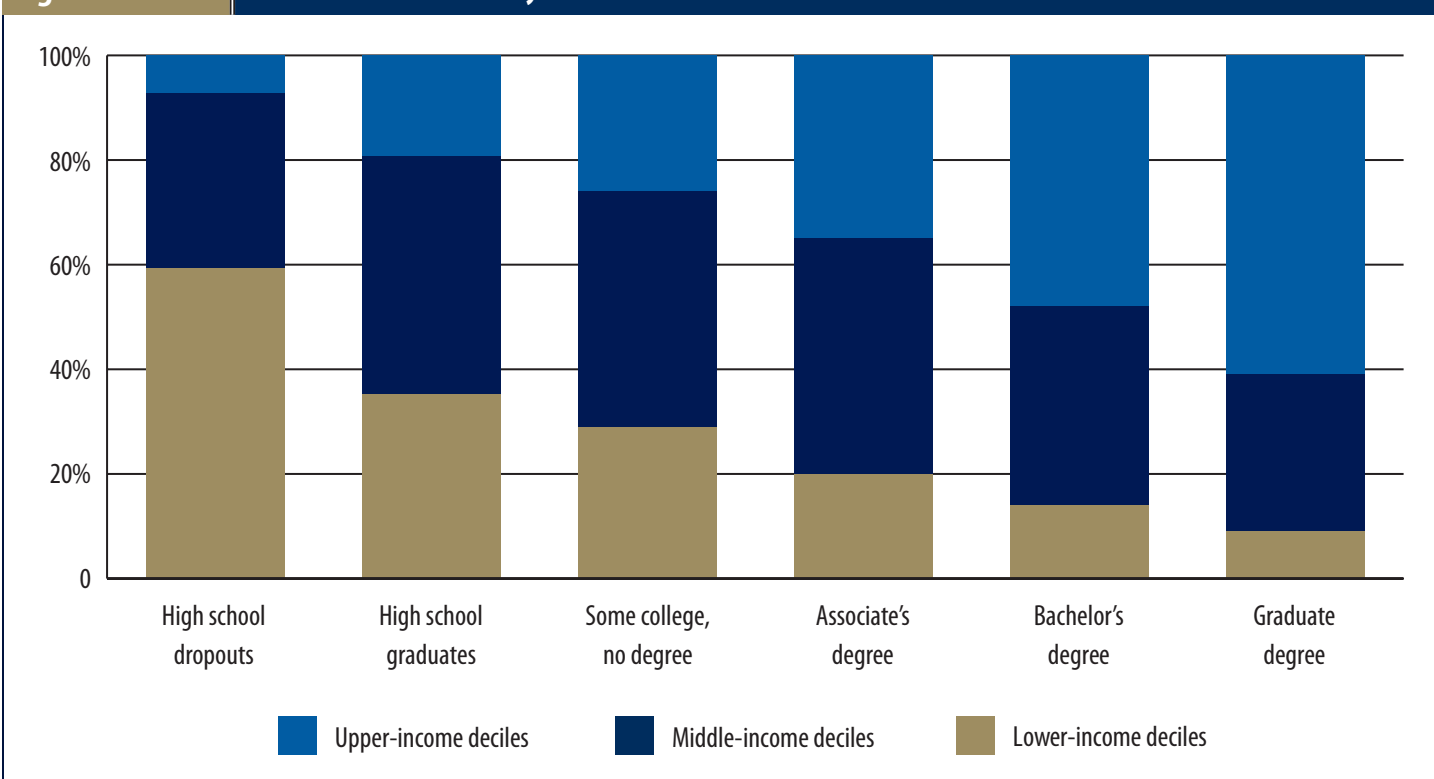
State governments play a critical role in creating and maintaining an infrastructure that will train middle-skill workers and attract industry investments to the region. SLC member state goals such as the Tennessee *Drive to 55*, which aims to prepare the state for 2025 labor demands by having 55 percent of its workforce attain a degree or certificate beyond high school,<sup>9</sup> and a plan implemented by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to have 60 percent of the state workforce attain a postsecondary credential or degree by 2030,<sup>10</sup> are initiatives that will propel states closer to developing a skilled workforce.

In the domain of postsecondary education and credentials, increasing the accessibility and appeal of technical and community colleges, and thereby removing the social stigma around them, is a state policy option with the potential to bring the supply of workers with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to an equal standing with industry demand. While



Source: Rothwell, Jonathan. The Hidden STEM Economy. Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. June 10, 2013. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2013/06/10-stem-economy-rothwell/thehiddenstemeconomy610.pdf> (accessed November 23, 2014).

**Figure 4** Household income by educational attainment in 2007



**Note:** Middle-income deciles comprise the middle two-fifths of the total number of households, while the upper- and lower-income deciles comprise the top and bottom three-tenths. **Source:** Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

**Table 2** 10 most common professions and salaries for associate's degree graduates in 2011

Occupation	Number of middle-skill jobs	Average annual salary
Registered nurses	805,389	\$52,000
Miscellaneous managers, including funeral service managers, postmasters and mail superintendents	167,727	\$58,000
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	127,722	\$39,000
Accountants and auditors	107,452	\$40,000
Diagnostic-related technologists and technicians	103,114	\$48,000
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers	93,245	\$44,000
Police officers	93,081	\$61,000
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	77,128	\$57,000
General and operations managers	67,562	\$68,000
Electricians	66,310	\$51,000

**Source:** Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

there are many advancements toward CTE that can be implemented at the high school level, the following analysis focuses on state programs that increase participation in technical and community college CTE programs, specifically in the form of student scholarships.<sup>‡</sup> The preponderance of evidence indicates that middle-class household incomes are more attainable by those with a member holding at least an associate's degree, and this reality is steering SLC policymakers toward programs that increase their technical and community college graduation rates. For selected states in the SLC region, the availability of postsecondary scholarships specifically targeted at two-year degree programs is examined.

## Florida

Legislatively implemented in 2007, the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant (FSAG-CE) is a need-based scholarship award-

<sup>‡</sup> A discussion of state workforce development programs in particular, including those by SLC state community college systems, can be reviewed in the July 2013 *SLC Regional Resource, Workforce Development in the SLC States*, available at [http://slcatlanta.org/Publications/EconDev/workdev\\_web.pdf](http://slcatlanta.org/Publications/EconDev/workdev_web.pdf).

ed to Florida residents who attend participating public community colleges or career centers.<sup>11</sup> To qualify, applicants must be a Florida resident and a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), not have a bachelor's degree, have at least part-time student status (six hours per semester), and meet general eligibility requirements<sup>§</sup> for receipt of state aid. To renew the scholarship, program participants must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA), maintain minimum student status, and continue filing a FAFSA.<sup>12</sup>

While the 2014-15 academic year annual award amount ranges from \$200 to \$2,610,<sup>13</sup> in 2012-13, the program awarded a total of \$2.3 million to 3,822 applicants, averaging \$592 of financial aid per awardee.<sup>14</sup> Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions totaled \$2,486.<sup>15</sup> To qualify for the maximum amount of assistance, a student's annual cost of attendance must meet or exceed the maximum amount of available assistance (\$2,610 for 2014-15) after accounting for the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and any other grants and scholarships the student is awarded. The student does not have to receive the Pell Grant<sup>†</sup> to receive an FSAG-CE award.<sup>16</sup> Funding for the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant program is capped by yearly legislative appropriations, and students are served by postsecondary financial aid offices on a first-come, first-served basis.<sup>17</sup>

## Georgia

During the 2013 legislative session, lawmakers introduced and approved the Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant (SIWDG) program.<sup>18</sup> Expanded in 2014, the program provides scholarships for students

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<sup>§</sup> General eligibility requirements are referenced several times in state analyses. The requirements include, but are not limited to, U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, or other eligible non-citizen status; registration with the United States Selective Service System; not being convicted of a drug-related criminal offense; in-state residency of at least one year; non-default status on a federal Title IV or state educational loan; not owing a refund on any federal or state educational financial assistance; and maintaining satisfactory academic progress.

<sup>†</sup> The Pell Grant is a federal financial aid program for undergraduate students demonstrating financial need. Financial need is determined through review of an annually submitted FAFSA, used to calculate the student's EFC. Several state scholarship programs also apply these calculations to determine the financial needs of postsecondary students.

in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) pursuing technical training in the following high-demand career fields: commercial truck driving, diesel mechanic, early childhood care/education, healthcare technologies, information technology, practical nursing, and welding.<sup>19</sup>

The grant provides up to \$500 for students taking nine or more hours of instruction per semester, or a one-time award of \$1,000 toward a certificate in commercial truck driving. The grant can be used for anything related to a student's costs. The SIWDG awards supplement Georgia Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Grants,<sup>\*\*</sup> which provide \$65 per semester hour of instruction at a TCSG institution, and SIWDG recipients must qualify for the HOPE Grant to receive financial assistance.<sup>20</sup> As such, grant recipients must file a FAFSA, maintain a 2.0 GPA, and meet general eligibility requirements.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the HOPE Grant, during the 2013-14 academic year, the SIWDG program awarded \$4.8 million to 7,212 postsecondary students,<sup>22</sup> approximately \$660 per recipient. Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions in Georgia totaled \$3,391.<sup>23</sup> Notably, students seeking an associate's degree do not qualify for the HOPE Grant but, rather, must apply for the HOPE Scholarship; the SIWDG provides awards only for certificates and diploma programs.<sup>24</sup>

## Louisiana

On October 7, 2014, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System announced an ambitious plan to double their graduates to 40,000 per year and double the number of students served by the system to 325,000 per year, among other goals, by 2020.<sup>25</sup> Toward that end, the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Tech Award, part of Louisiana's merit-based TOPS created in 1997, provides scholarships for students seeking associate's degrees. To qualify for the program, applicants must achieve a minimum high school GPA of 2.50 (GPA is calculated only for core courses), complete one of two sets of core classes, enroll in a full-time technical school pro-

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<sup>\*\*</sup> The Georgia HOPE Grant is a merit-based financial assistance program for students attending Georgia's two-year and four-year public postsecondary education institutions. The HOPE Grant and the HOPE Scholarship are two separate programs, with separate qualification regulations.





Welding is one high-demand career field identified by SIWDG, photo courtesy of wistechcolleges via flickr Creative Commons License

gram, earn a minimum score of 17 on the ACT college readiness assessment, or the equivalent SAT score, and fulfill standard residency requirements.<sup>26</sup>

Program participants must refile a FAFSA every year to renew the scholarship, maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester and a 2.5 GPA at the end of a spring semester, have full-time student status, and finish a degree program within two years.<sup>27</sup> The TOPS Tech Award for the 2013-14 academic year equaled \$2,656,<sup>28</sup> while average in-state tuition and fees for 2012-13 at public, two-year institutions totaled \$2,837.<sup>29</sup> The TOPS Tech Award may be combined with other financial aid, but if a student's financial aid package exceeds an institution's cost of attendance, the award amount may be reduced.<sup>30</sup>

## Mississippi

House Bill 424 of 2014 would have implemented the Mississippi Promise Community College Tuition Gap Pilot Program to provide funds for eligible students of public community and junior colleges to pay for tuition not already covered by federal, state, institutional and/or private financial aid. Students would have had to be enrolled full-time and maintain a 2.5 GPA, costing the state \$4.5 million per year to cover 75,000 commu-

nity college students. The bill passed in the House, but died in the Senate. Meanwhile, six out of 15 Mississippi community colleges do utilize county or private sector funding to provide last-dollar scholarships<sup>††</sup> for the cost of tuition.<sup>31</sup> Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public two-year institutions in Mississippi totaled \$2,276.<sup>32</sup>

## Missouri

The A+ Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to students graduating from 533 public high schools designated as A+ Schools<sup>††</sup> by the State Board of Education

<sup>††</sup> Last-dollar scholarships are those that can be used toward any remaining student account balance after all other forms of non-loan financial aid have been exhausted. As such, in general practice, they provide the "last dollar" to cover the cost of tuition and fees for eligible award recipients.

<sup>††</sup> The Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 created a program that grants an "A+ Designation" to high schools that commit to reducing their dropout rate, raising academic expectations, providing career pathways, and collaborating with the business and higher education sectors. Originally a secondary education financial aid mechanism, the program now serves as a set of standards that high schools must maintain in order for their students to qualify for the state's two-year postsecondary scholarship, the A+ Schools Financial Incentive Program.

to pursue an associate's degree from an in-state institution.<sup>33</sup> To receive the scholarship, students also must:

- » Meet residency requirements;
- » File a FAFSA each year;
- » Enroll and maintain full-time status at one of 67 in-state public community colleges, public vocational/technical schools or private two-year vocational/technical schools;
- » Graduate with a 2.5 GPA and maintain the same GPA at the postsecondary institution of enrollment;
- » Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring;
- » Maintain 95 percent attendance for grades 9-12; and
- » Achieve a minimum ACT math subscore of 17 or the equivalent COMPASS exam score (beginning with the class of 2015).<sup>34</sup>

The A+ Scholarship covers the cost of tuition and fees after all non-loan federal financial assistance has been applied toward a student's postsecondary account balance. However, the reimbursement rate is capped at the tuition rates charged by the State Technical College of Missouri. For the 2014-15 academic year, the maximum rate is \$158 per credit hour.<sup>35</sup> Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions in Missouri totaled \$2,716.<sup>36</sup>

## North Carolina

Initiated with the first \$10 million appropriation in the state's 1999-2001 biennial budget, the North Carolina Community College Grant Program is a need-based scholarship awarded to students who attend in-state community colleges. To qualify for the program, students must be residents of North Carolina, maintain part-time student status, make satisfactory academic progress (as defined by their particular institution), not already have a bachelor's degree, and file a FAFSA. The amount awarded is based on the student's EFC and currently ranges from \$150 to \$1,700 per year.<sup>37</sup> Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions totaled \$2,212.<sup>38</sup>

## South Carolina

In 2001, South Carolina established its Lottery Tuition Assistance Program for students enrolled in two-year in-state public or private postsecondary institutions. The financial aid is applied toward the cost of tuition after all non-loan federal and state financial aid has been applied.<sup>39</sup> Per the South Carolina Commission on Higher

Education, the scholarship currently is available only for students attending Spartanburg Methodist College or one of four University of South Carolina regional campuses.<sup>40</sup>

To receive the scholarship, students must file a FAFSA, enroll for at least six hours of instruction per semester, maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a certificate, diploma or associate's degree, achieve a minimum 2.0 GPA after completing 24 credit hours, not be a recipient of other state postsecondary scholarships, and meet general eligibility requirements.<sup>41</sup> For the 2014-15 academic year, the award amount is capped at \$1,140 per semester for full-time students and \$95 per credit hour for part-time students.<sup>42</sup> Average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions totaled \$3,820.<sup>43</sup>

## Tennessee

On May 12, 2014, Governor Bill Haslam signed the *Tennessee Promise Scholarship Act of 2014*, creating the first program in the nation to cover the full cost of tuition and fees for high school graduates entering a community or technical college. Specifically, Tennessee will provide students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by any federal or state grants, scholarships, awards, or other financial aid for which the student is eligible.<sup>44</sup> Eligibility standards for the award are more extensive than those set by most Southern states' technical school scholarship programs. To qualify for the award, students must:

- » Be residents of the state;
- » Graduate from a high school within the state or an equivalent;
- » Perform eight hours of community service per semester;
- » Participate in a mentoring program;
- » Enroll and maintain full-time student status at an eligible in-state institution;
- » Maintain a 2.0 GPA or make satisfactory academic progress;
- » File a FAFSA every year of the program; and
- » Fulfill other general eligibility requirements.<sup>45</sup>

Inspired by a student scholarship and mentoring non-profit program based in Knoxville,<sup>46</sup> a critical component of Tennessee Promise is the engagement of local, non-profit partnering organizations, selected by each county mayor, which will provide individual guidance for each

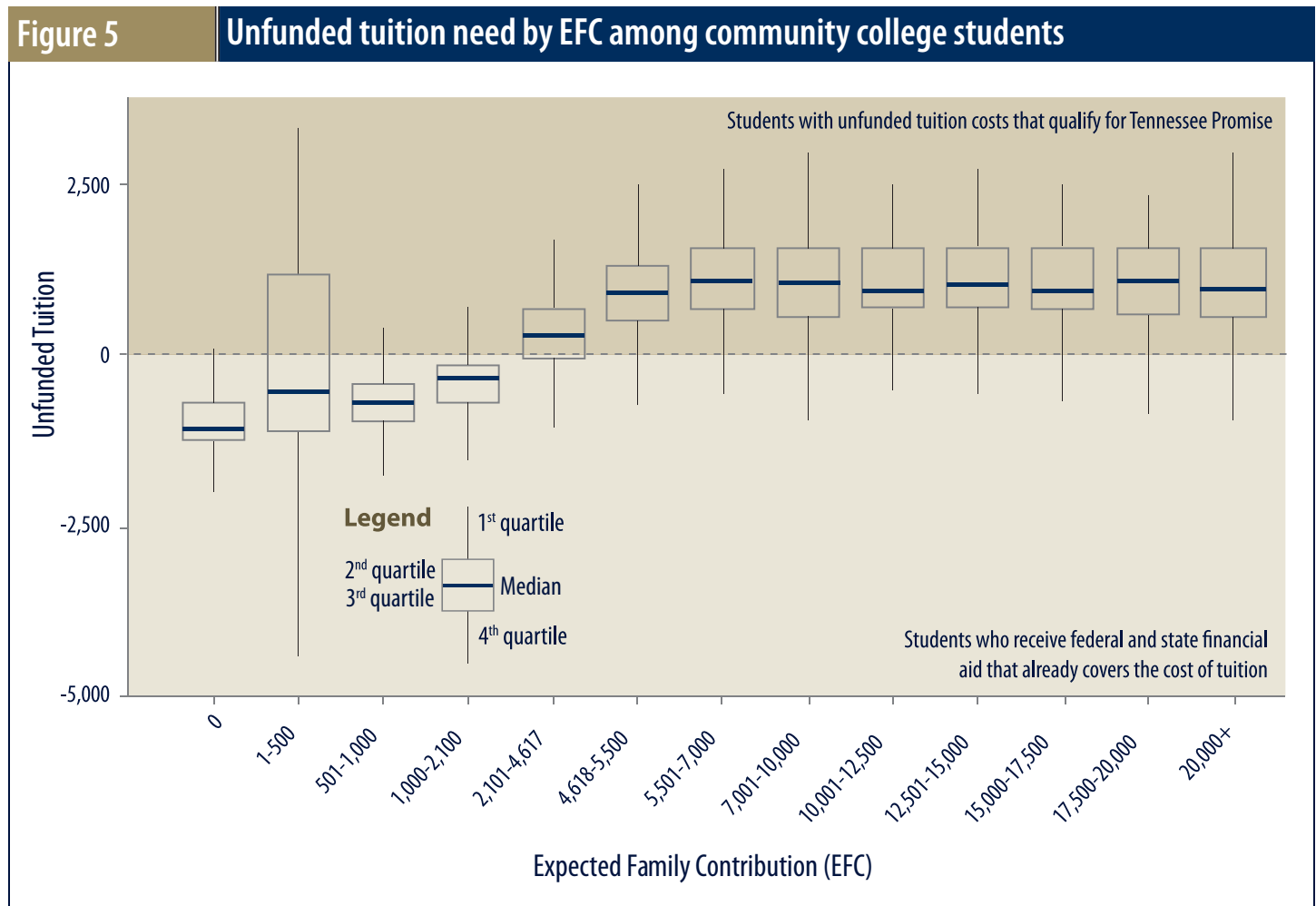


participant through a personalized mentor. These organizations also will work with high school guidance counselors to target at-risk students who otherwise would not pursue any education beyond high school. The program will launch with the high school graduating class of 2015. Students can use the Tennessee Promise at any of Tennessee's 27 colleges of applied technology, 13 community colleges or any in-state independent or four-year public university offering an associate's degree.<sup>47</sup>

The Tennessee Promise scholarship applies only to the cost of tuition and fees, after all other forms of financial aid have been exhausted. It does not provide resources for expenses such as transportation, room and board, books, and personal expenses, which can be an impediment for some students seeking an associate's degree. Further, research from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission indicates that the students with the highest need for

financial assistance will not qualify for Tennessee Promise, since the federal Pell Grant and other state financial aid programs will fully cover the cost of their tuition and fees. Figure 5 demonstrates the following:

- » The majority of community college students with an EFC of \$0 will not qualify for financial aid toward tuition;
- » Less than half of students with an EFC between \$1 and \$500 will qualify for additional financial aid to cover tuition;
- » A majority of students with EFCs between \$1,000 and \$2,100 will not qualify for financial aid toward tuition; and
- » The majority of students with EFCs of \$2,101 or higher will not qualify for fully covered tuition through federal and state financial assistance, and would benefit from additional state assistance for that cost.



**Source:** Deaton, Russ and David Wright. A Student Level Analysis of Financial Aid. Tennessee Higher Education Commission. [http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ideas\\_summit/A\\_Student\\_Level\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Financial\\_Aid.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ideas_summit/A_Student_Level_Analysis_of_Financial_Aid.pdf) (accessed November 13, 2014).

When Tennessee Promise was created, the state estimated that approximately 20,000 high school student would apply for the scholarship. One week before the 2015 application deadline, almost 45,000 students had applied, demonstrating the momentum behind the initiative.<sup>48</sup> Although the number of students that ultimately receive the Tennessee Promise scholarship will be less than 45,000, the significance of the program lies with the explicit agreement that it makes with almost every high school student in the state. The message sent to high school students is that if they are unable or uninterested in pursuing a four-year degree, they have the option to pursue middle-skill job training and the opportunity for a middle-class lifestyle if they commit to achieving minimal qualifying standards and a two-year degree. Meanwhile, those students who are able to make a longer commitment and be held to more rigorous standards also have options, but must be ready to invest more time and money toward their future.

## Texas

The Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) is the state's need-based scholarship program specifically for students enrolled in public two-year colleges. To qualify, students must:

- » Be a resident of Texas;
- » File a FAFSA or Texas Application for State Financial Aid;
- » Have a nine-month EFC of \$4,800 or less;
- » Enroll and maintain at least half-time student status;
- » Maintain at least a 2.5 GPA and complete at least 75 percent of attempted hours;
- » Not be a recipient of the Towards EXcellence, Access and Success (TEXAS) Grant;
- » Earn a degree within four years; and
- » Meet general eligibility requirements.<sup>49</sup>

Scholarship recipients may use the award toward any higher education expense. However, the award is not disbursed to the student before institutional tuition and fees have been paid. While the maximum award amounts for the 2014-15 academic year are \$8,000 per year at public state colleges, \$2,700 at public community colleges and \$4,700 at public technical colleges,<sup>50</sup> average in-state tuition and fees for the 2012-13 academic year at public, two-year institutions totaled \$1,815.<sup>51</sup> Also in 2012-13, the state awarded \$11.6 million to 6,563 students through TEOG, averaging \$1,760 per student and accounting for approximately 2 percent of the state's total need-based student financial aid grants. Meanwhile, the TEXAS



Central Texas College, with yearly tuition and fees of \$2,040, and multiple associate's degree programs (photo courtesy of Freese and Nichols)

Grant program, also available but not limited to students seeking associate's degrees, awarded 45 percent of the state's \$643 million yearly total of need-based student aid financial aid grants.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

SLC member states lead the nation in postsecondary education scholarship program dollars spent per capita. In fact, as demonstrated by Table 4, SLC states represent six of the top 10 states in the United States measured by per capita investments in postsecondary education grants, a laudable achievement.<sup>53</sup> However, given the anticipated needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century industries, states should reconsider the priority and benefits provided by these investments. By 2018, in 14 of 15 SLC states, more in-state jobs will require an associate's degree or some college rather than a bachelor's degree or higher (see Appendix A) and, in nine of 15 SLC states, approximately three-quarters of new job openings in 2018 will require an educational attainment of an associate's degree or lower (Figure 2).<sup>54</sup>

Table 5 provides the average annual cost of four-year and two-year institutions in SLC member states. Given that the national average cost of tuition and fees of in-state public four-year institutions is more than six times that of in-state public two-year institutions, for states seeking to increase their supply of middle-skill, middle-income workers, investments in two-year degree scholarship programs provide a greater cost-benefit over four-year degree programs.

Several strategies exist for states motivated to increase worker and student CTE training, such as high school and college dual enrollment programs, apprenticeships, employer-based training, and technical certifications. However, of these options, studies show that an associate's degree is the most reliable avenue to middle-skill employment and middle-class incomes for program participants. State government programs that increase the accessibility of associate's degrees do not have to be vast and expensive to make a big difference in changing the perception

Table 3 Summary of funding for two-year postsecondary scholarship programs in selected SLC member states during 2012-13 academic year						
State	Program	Funding	Number of award recipients	Average award	Total funding for student grant & aid programs	Two-year program funding as percentage of state total
Florida	Student Assistance Grant - Public Postsecondary Career Education	\$2,262,699	3,822	\$592	\$550,012,208	0.4%
Georgia	Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant	2012-13 data unavailable				
Louisiana	Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Tech Award	\$2,348,636	1,378	\$1,704	\$218,107,828	1.1%
Missouri	A+ Scholarship Program	\$28,579,570	12,090	\$2,364	\$104,262,157	27.4%
North Carolina	Community College Grant Program	\$14,361,593	25,717	\$558	\$414,737,654	3.5%
South Carolina	Lottery Tuition Assistance Program	\$53,311,236	43,524	\$1,225	\$319,029,041	16.7%
Tennessee	Tennessee Promise	2012-13 data unavailable				
Texas	Educational Opportunity Grant Program	\$11,554,030	6,563	\$1,760	\$869,485,016	1.3%

Sources: "State Data Quick Check" National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs. [http://www.nassgap.org/survey/state\\_data\\_check.asp](http://www.nassgap.org/survey/state_data_check.asp) (accessed December 10, 2014); "TOPS Payment Summary by Award Level for Academic Year 2012-2013" Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance. November 7, 2014. <http://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/Stats/TOPS2012-13.pdf> (accessed December 10, 2014).



Table 4	Postsecondary education grant dollars by state/district/territory per estimated age 18-24 population in 2012-13		
State	Estimated Population Age 18-24	Total Grant Dollars/Population Age 18-24	
1. South Carolina	488,056	\$723.73	
2. West Virginia	171,916	\$618.17	
3. Tennessee	629,930	\$593.11	
4. Arkansas	288,323	\$539.47	
5. Georgia	1,017,363	\$526.84	
6. Washington	666,438	\$518.70	
7. New Mexico	210,535	\$506.13	
8. New York	1,982,546	\$490.79	
9. New Jersey	791,921	\$474.85	
10. Louisiana	473,242	\$460.80	
11. Kentucky	426,934	\$457.82	
12. Washington, D.C.	80,982	\$421.52	
13. Indiana	666,413	\$389.41	
14. California	4,009,616	\$379.39	
15. Pennsylvania	1,244,564	\$362.59	
16. North Carolina	985,385	\$346.28	
17. Minnesota	507,084	\$335.91	
18. Vermont	66,952	\$301.67	
19. Illinois	1,259,571	\$295.31	
20. Virginia	829,207	\$289.03	
21. Florida	1,782,249	\$265.68	
22. Wyoming	58,566	\$264.15	
23. Texas	2,713,763	\$259.19	
24. Oklahoma	392,936	\$240.37	
25. Nevada	255,083	\$232.56	
26. Delaware	92,135	\$227.12	
27. Wisconsin	558,983	\$221.52	

(continued)		
State	Estimated Population Age 18-24	Total Grant Dollars/Population Age 18-24
28. Iowa	317,316	\$197.90
29. North Dakota	92,702	\$194.25
30. Missouri	595,504	\$175.08
31. Maryland	564,079	\$165.93
32. Colorado	515,291	\$145.72
33. Maine	113,795	\$144.18
34. Oregon	367,427	\$141.98
35. Massachusetts	690,871	\$134.39
36. Connecticut	343,891	\$133.25
37. Alaska	82,327	\$116.61
38. Ohio	1,108,802	\$109.49
39. Rhode Island	117,954	\$105.18
40. Puerto Rico	371,661	\$98.51
41. Michigan	1,004,904	\$92.22
42. Nebraska	188,686	\$84.79
43. Mississippi	313,795	\$79.17
44. Kansas	300,275	\$59.60
45. Montana	100,283	\$54.96
46. South Dakota	84,997	\$51.02
47. Idaho	155,677	\$34.22
48. Arizona	666,278	\$32.17
49. Utah	332,312	\$29.26
50. Hawaii	137,027	\$23.54
51. Alabama	485,718	\$19.63
52. New Hampshire	127,049	-
U.S. Total	31,829,314	\$301.34

Source: 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid: 2012-2013 Academic Year. National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs. <http://www.nassgap.org/viewrepository.aspx?categoryID=3#> (accessed November 30, 2014).

and the affordability of a middle-class education. Student scholarships are not the only way to increase a state's supply of middle-skill workers. However, given that cost is the primary impediment for postsecondary education and a postsecondary degree leads to higher lifetime wages, it is by far the simplest.

Meanwhile, the fact remains that some students lack the financial resources or, simply, a desire, to pursue a four-year degree in a higher education institution, and there are multiple other circumstances that can prevent some students from being able to commit the time and money toward that level of education. An opportunity to con-

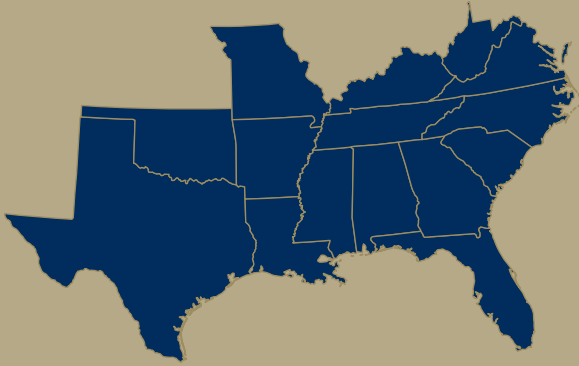
sider the middle path of a technical college education may deter these students from a lifetime of low-wage employment. If this option comes at a reasonable cost and with a capable support structure, the chance of steering these citizens toward a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle and becoming a productive member of society becomes an actual possibility. State programs that promote this economic participation, such as last-dollar scholarships for technical and community colleges, are one essential component of the overall solution toward resolving the imbalance between industry demand for skilled workers in the next decade and the appropriately skilled workforce available to fill that demand.

Table 5		Average annual costs of postsecondary institutions in SLC member states in 2012-13			
State	In-state public four-year institutions		In-state private four-year institutions		In-state public two-year institutions
	Total	Tuition and required fees	Total	Tuition and required fees	Tuition and required fees (Total not available)
Alabama	\$16,546	\$8,073	\$22,486	\$13,983	\$4,048
Arkansas	\$13,936	\$6,604	\$25,267	\$18,004	\$2,633
Florida	\$14,170	\$4,377	\$30,123	\$20,155	\$2,486
Georgia	\$15,331	\$6,325	\$33,177	\$22,456	\$2,652
Kentucky	\$16,581	\$8,416	\$28,654	\$20,639	\$3,391
Louisiana	\$14,245	\$5,817	\$39,088	\$28,691	\$2,837
Mississippi	\$13,583	\$6,147	\$20,881	\$14,592	\$2,276
Missouri	\$16,236	\$7,815	\$27,615	\$19,020	\$2,716
North Carolina	\$14,514	\$6,223	\$36,194	\$26,336	\$2,212
Oklahoma	\$13,005	\$5,882	\$29,230	\$20,572	\$2,904
South Carolina	\$18,655	\$10,691	\$29,165	\$20,990	\$3,820
Tennessee	\$15,416	\$7,472	\$31,135	\$22,046	\$3,526
Texas	\$15,940	\$7,402	\$34,861	\$25,174	\$1,815
Virginia	\$18,843	\$9,866	\$30,483	\$21,524	\$3,910
West Virginia	\$14,126	\$5,599	\$19,120	\$10,721	\$3,135
U.S. Average	\$17,474	\$8,070	\$35,074	\$24,525	\$2,792

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 and Fall 2012, Institutional Characteristics component; and Spring 2012 and Spring 2013, Enrollment component. [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13\\_330.20.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_330.20.asp) (accessed November 30, 2014).

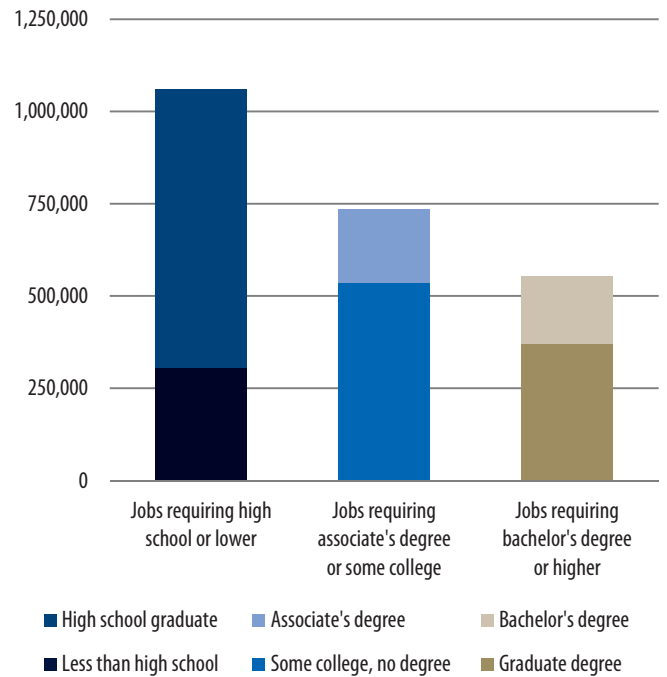
## Appendix A

### 2018 Education Requirements for Jobs in Southern States

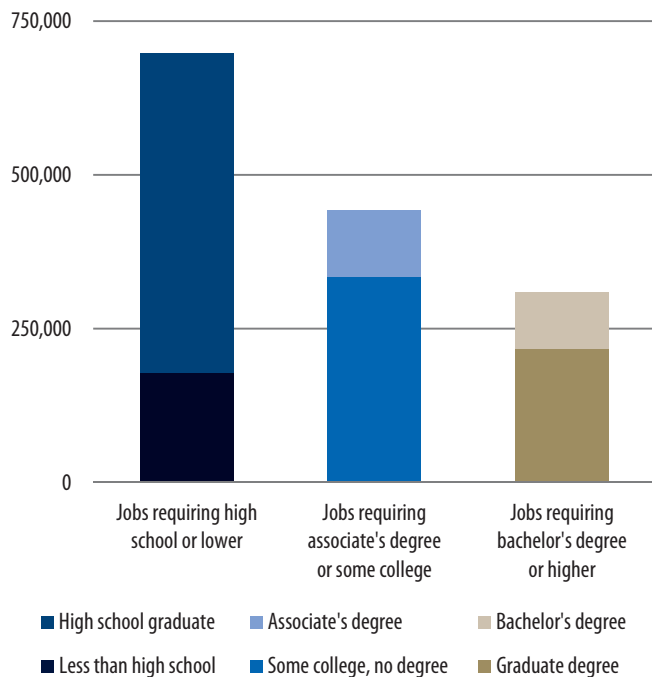


**Source:** Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018 – State-Level Analysis*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010.  
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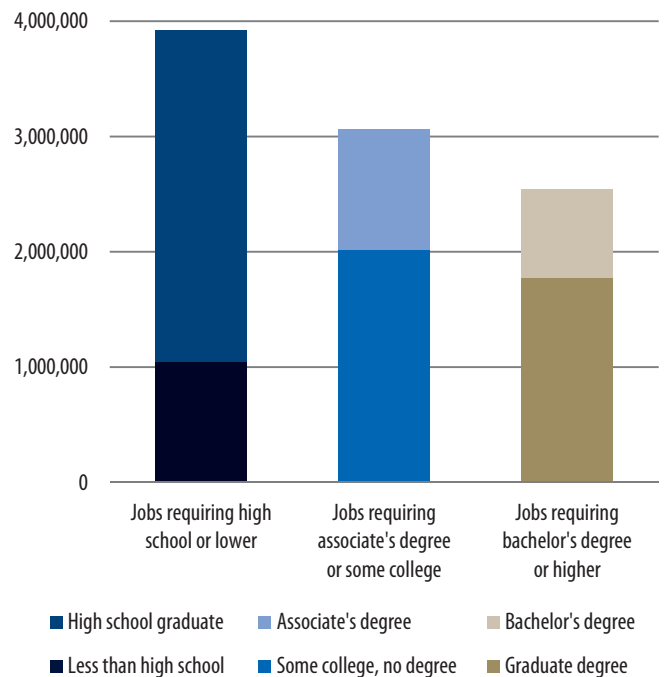
#### Education Requirements for Jobs in Alabama 2018



#### Education Requirements for Jobs in Arkansas 2018

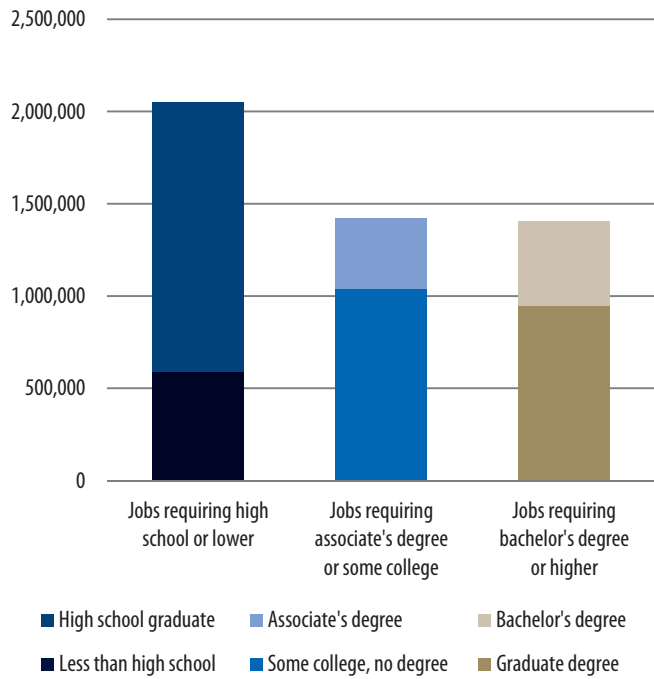


#### Education Requirements for Jobs in Florida 2018

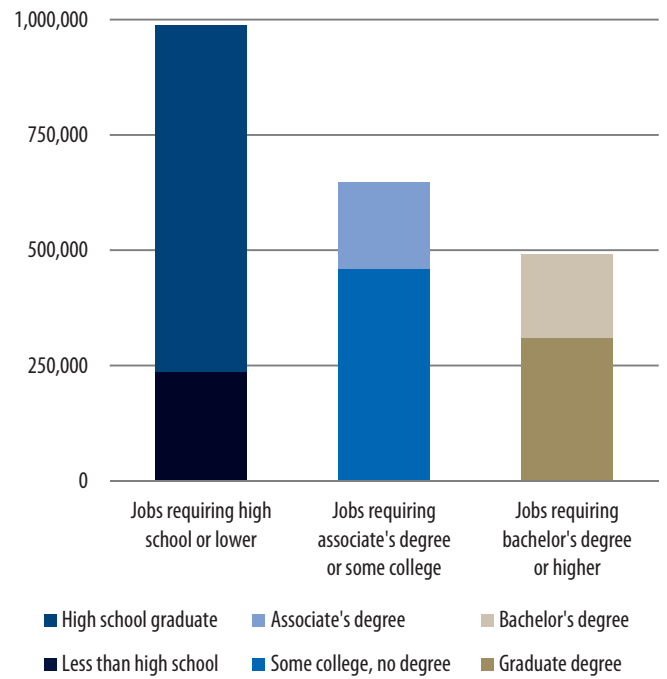




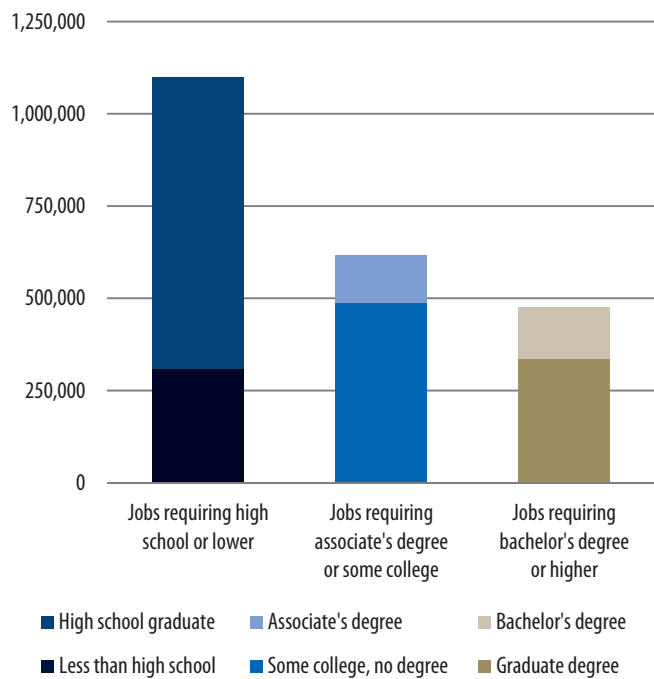
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Georgia 2018**



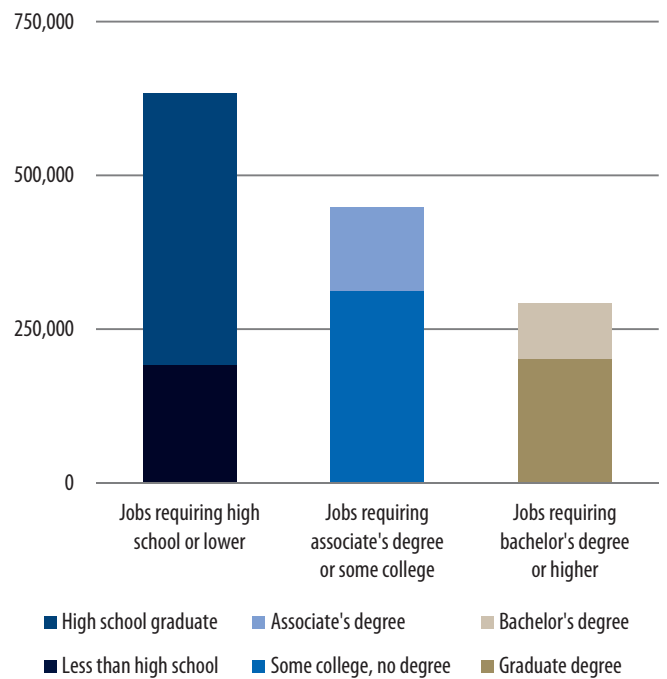
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Kentucky 2018**



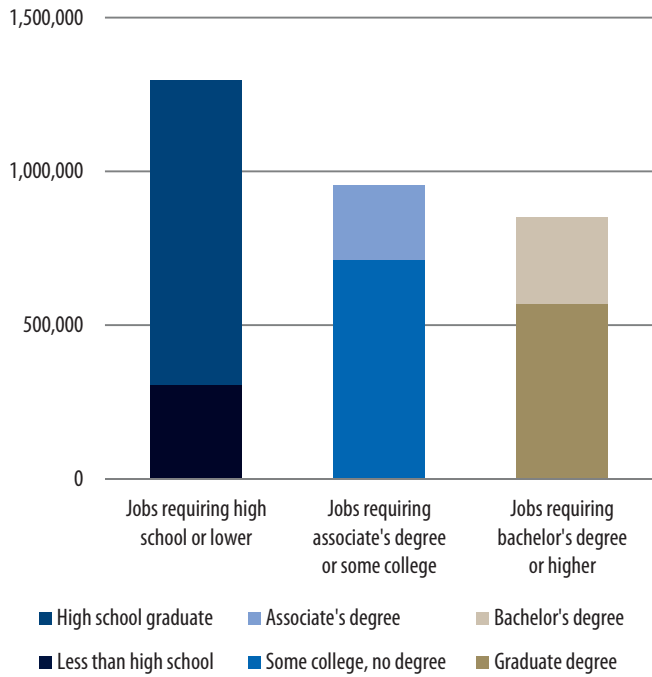
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Louisiana 2018**



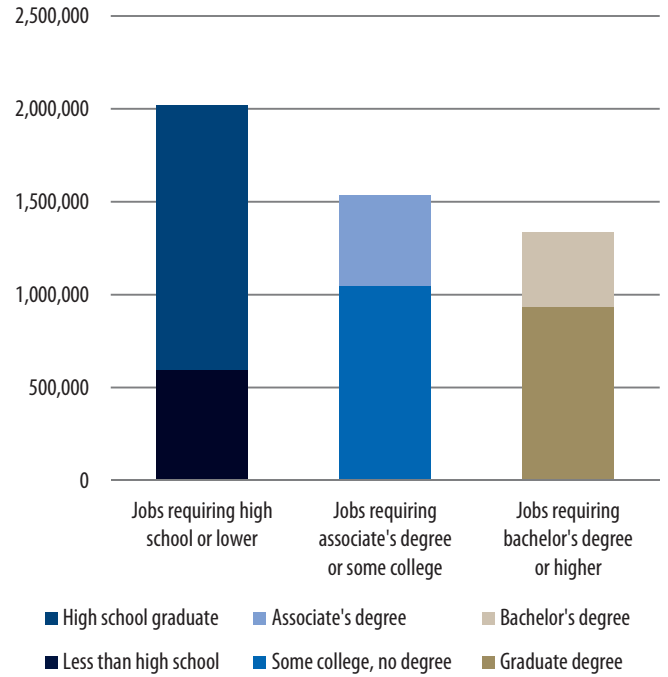
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Mississippi 2018**



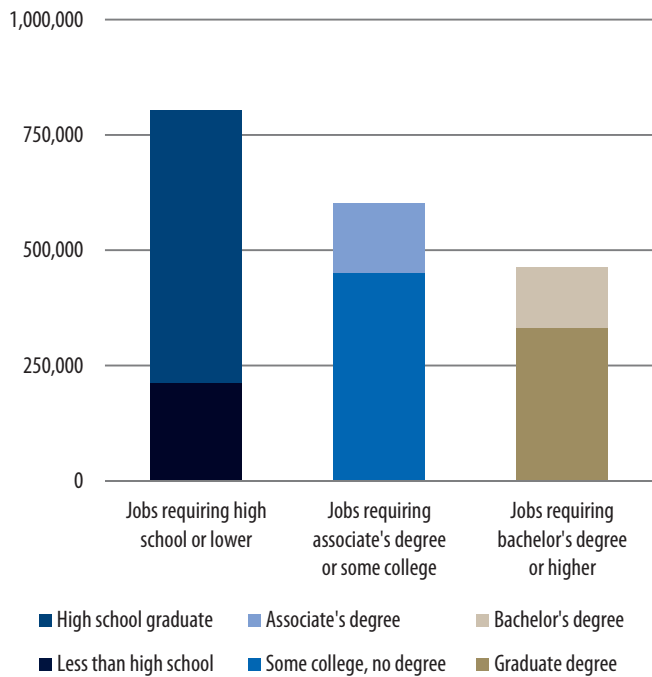
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Missouri 2018**



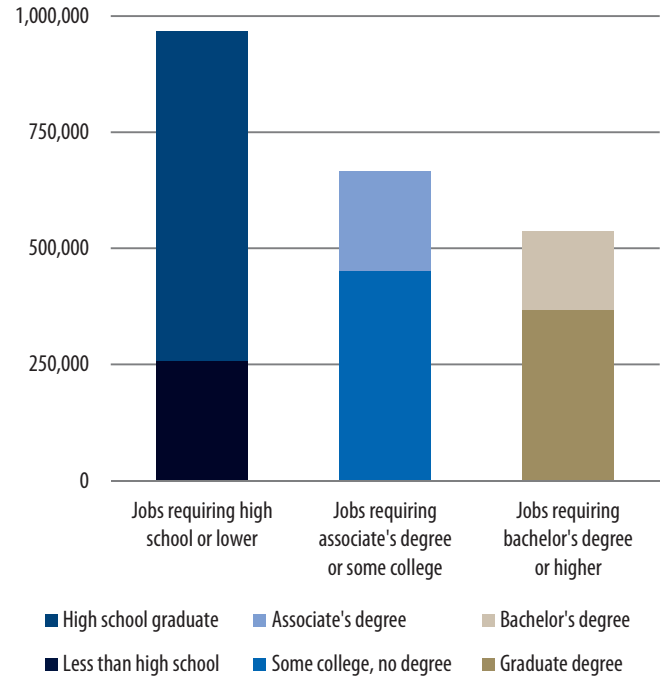
**Education Requirements for Jobs in North Carolina 2018**



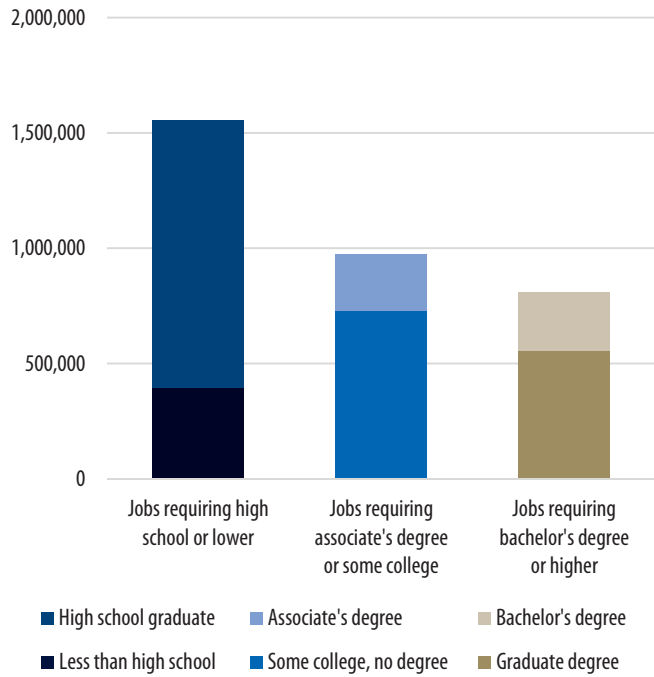
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Oklahoma 2018**



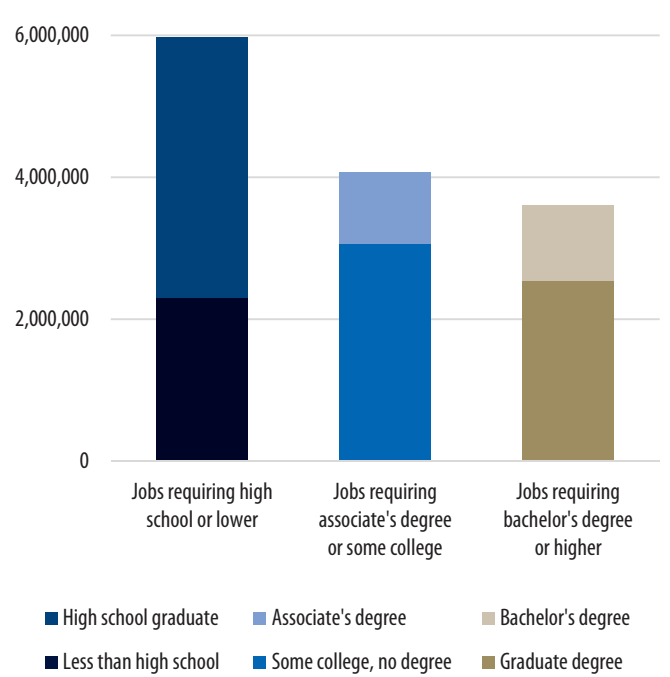
**Education Requirements for Jobs in South Carolina 2018**



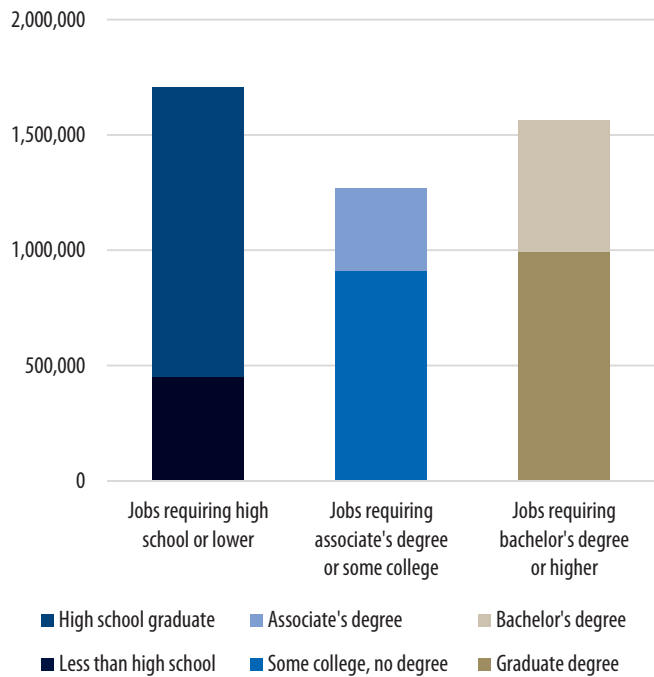
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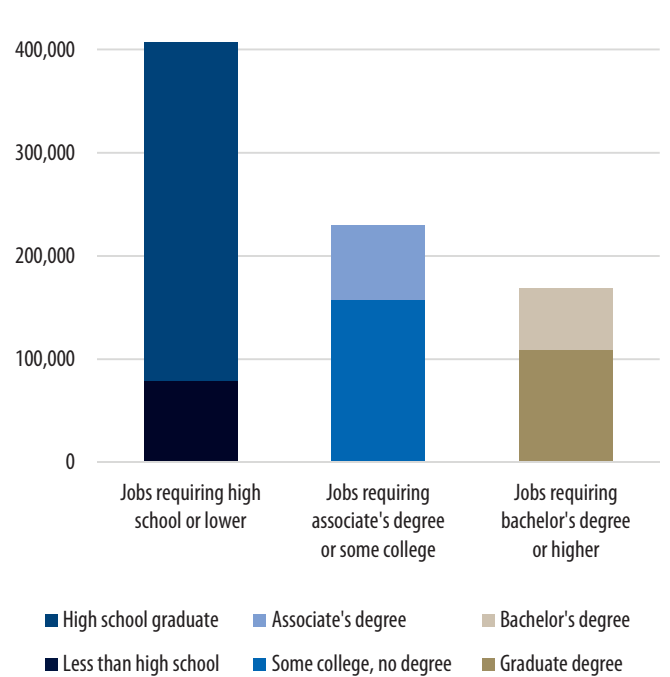
**Education Requirements for Jobs in Texas 2018**



**Education Requirements for Jobs in Virginia 2018**



**Education Requirements for Jobs in West Virginia 2018**





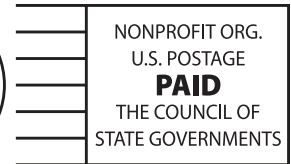
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# SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

## THE SOUTHERN OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

### **REGIONAL VIEW** NATIONAL REACH

**T**his report was prepared by Policy Analyst Mikko Lindberg for the Education Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) of The Council of State Governments (CSG), under the chairmanship of Senator John R. Unger II of West Virginia. This report reflects the body of policy research made available to appointed and elected officials by the Southern Office.

The Southern Office of The Council of State Governments, located in Atlanta, Georgia, fosters and encourages inter-governmental cooperation among its 15 member states. In large measure, this is achieved through the ongoing work of the standing committees of its Southern Legislative Conference and supporting groups. Through member outreach in state capitols, policy research, international member delegations, staff exchange programs,

meetings and fly-ins, staff support state policymakers and legislative staff in their work to build a stronger region.

Founded in 1947, the SLC is a member-driven organization and the largest of four regional legislative groups operating under CSG and comprises the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

The SLC's six standing committees provide a forum which allows policymakers to share knowledge in their area of expertise with colleagues from across the South. By working together within the SLC and participating on its committees, Southern state legislative leaders are able to speak in a distinctive, unified voice while addressing issues that affect their states and the entire region.