

Appendix D: Additional Middle-Skill Fields for Consideration

The researchers looked at several other middle-skill areas that ultimately were not selected for in-depth examination, but are worth further consideration. All of these other fields present middle-skill career opportunities with value in the Lower Hudson Valley labor market.

Utilities In the course of the research, the project partners had a conversation with Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) about its middle-skill workforce needs. While jobs with Con Ed and other utility companies may not be plentiful, they offer good middle-skill career opportunities, especially for individuals who are technically inclined. For example, Con Ed employs people in middle-skill occupations in technical areas that can lead to careers with an organization that still very much has a “develop and promote from within” culture.

Con Ed conducts a rigorous assessment for all entry-level jobs. The utility reports that many candidates do not score well enough on the mathematics portion of the assessment to be considered for employment. The utility hires people with a high school diploma but prefers people with an associate degree for many of its entry-level positions, as people with this credential tend to have the skills and knowledge to both perform the entry-level job and be promoted easily. The stakeholders should continue to work with Con Ed and other utilities to provide them with a pipeline of qualified workers, and to offer students and job seekers good career opportunities with these promote from within employers.

Manufacturing Manufacturing employment has declined over the last 10 years, but the businesses that remain have become more sophisticated, and often require workers with advanced skills. There are niches within manufacturing that warrant further attention. Some of the community colleges have developed expertise with this sector, and there may be additional opportunities, especially for a customized approach.

Clinical Health Care fields Health Care is large and growing in the Lower Hudson Valley. Although health information management was the focus area within this sector in this New Skills at Work project, some clinical fields warrant further attention from the Stakeholders. There are several disciplines where a regional approach might make sense. Institutions may want to collaborate to ensure that educational offerings are differentiated and scaled to demand. By their nature, programs in clinical health care fields are expensive, complicated and time-consuming to establish. Many clinical health care occupations require State licensing. For others, an industry certification is preferred by employers.

- **Registered Nurse.** Industry employers, organized labor, and educational institutions all mentioned the labor market demand for Registered Nurses, owing to projected industry growth, retirements, and restructuring of the health care system. However, they also pointed out that many employers, particularly hospitals, now require a bachelor’s degree for this job. Those without a bachelor’s degree are often required to earn that degree within a certain number of years of hire. This trend towards requiring a bachelor’s degree moved the Registered Nurse occupation beyond the realm of a middle-skill opportunity. There also appear to be constraints to expanding educational offerings in this field. Current programs find it challenging to expand the number of clinical placements needed to fulfill training and licensing requirements.
- **Medical Assistant.** While program capacity for certificate and associate degree programs in this field is robust, some offerings may be in need of updating. The role of a Medical Assistant is changing, becoming a hybrid clinical/administrative job. Educational institutions should make sure that they are current with the changes to Medical Assistants’ scope of practice. Although no State license is required to work as a Medical Assistant, most employers prefer a certification

from an industry-recognized credentialing organization, and some are preferred over others. Specifically, the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA)'s Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) appears to be the preferred certification, although any recognized certification is better than none.

- **Certified Dental Assistant.** There is labor market demand for Certified Dental Assistants, but, based on feedback from experts in the field, this demand does not extend to Dental Hygienists, which would be the next step on the career path for dental assistants. For this reason, and also because of high program start-up costs, it was not selected for this project.

At the time local program capacity was researched, there were no offerings in the Lower Hudson Valley that prepared students for the State-licensed Certified Dental Assistant. Certification is required for certain tasks, such as taking dental impressions and patient medical histories, and it has market value. Dental assistants who are not certified cannot perform the full range of tasks included in certification. Because equipment and associated startup costs for an independent training program may be prohibitively high, interested stakeholders should explore a partnership with New York Medical College, which is on track to start a new DDS program in Valhalla in the fall of 2016.

- **Physical Therapist Assistant.** This is a State-licensed occupation and SUNY Orange County Community College is the only institution near the Lower Hudson Valley with a program accredited by the American Physical Therapist Association. With modest annual

openings and high education requirements, more research is needed to determine where, and to what extent, additional capacity is warranted. Physical Therapist is the next step in this career path, and it increasingly requires a doctorate in order to practice. This is a giant leap from the associate degree required for Physical Therapist Assistants.

- **Occupational Therapy Assistant.** This is also a State-licensed occupation. There are a few community colleges in and around the Lower Hudson Valley region, including Rockland Community College, that prepare students to work in this field, but their collective capacity is small (71 students in 2014). The stakeholders may want to consider whether additional capacity is needed, especially with an aging population in the area.
- **Laboratory Technician.** There is labor market demand for this occupation, but programs are expensive and complicated to set up, and salaries are often low.
- **Anesthesia Technologist.** There might be a need for an associate degree program in this occupation. There is a new requirement for licensing/certification and no local education capacity. However, it is not clear whether the number of projected job openings warrant additional investments in capacity.