

Policy Watch Webcast

Advancing the Post-Pandemic Workforce

April 15, 2021



Some of the critical questions and issues we will be answering today

- What will the post-pandemic economy look like?
- What will be the leading skills in demand in the post-pandemic economy?
- How can the US prepare and train the American workforce for the demands of the next economy?
- What are the main components of a comprehensive, collaborative strategy for preparing, upskilling, and reskilling a future-ready workforce?



Today's Speakers



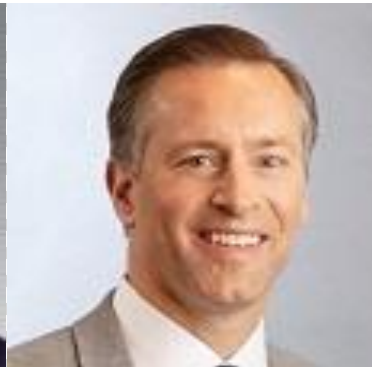
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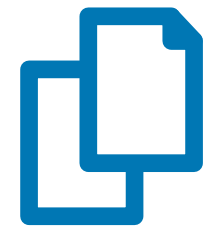
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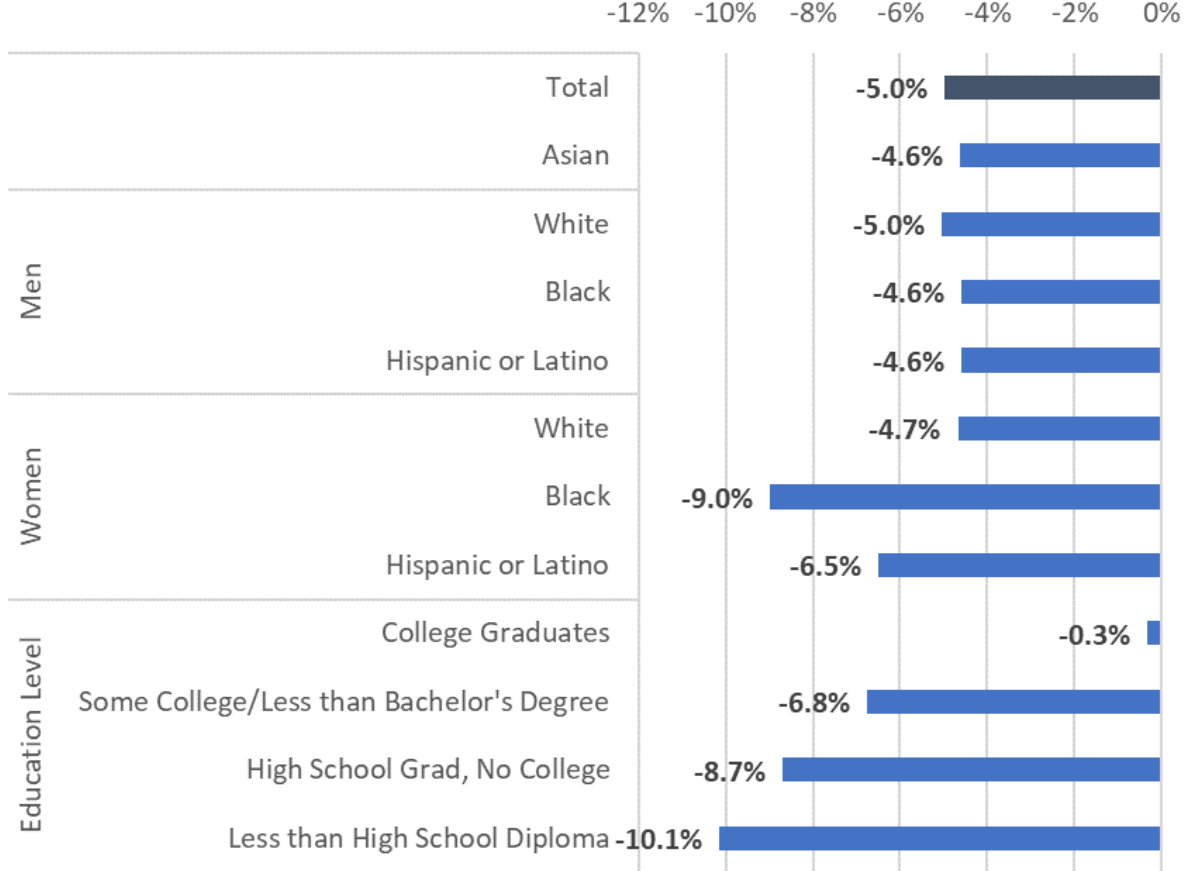
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Black and Hispanic women and those with less education have been hardest hit by pandemic job losses

- Job losses were concentrated among **low-wage occupations** across all sectors of the economy
- Social distancing measures and rapidly advancing technologies were a **one-two punch** to minority groups overrepresented in high-risk occupations
 - Transmission risk + Automation risk
- A fast-paced economic recovery will **not be enough** to get Americans back to work
- **Labor market scarring** will hinder widespread recovery
 - While the unemployment rate continues to drop, long-term unemployment keeps rising

Percent change in employment from February 2020 (prepandemic) to March 2021, by demographic group, seasonally adjusted



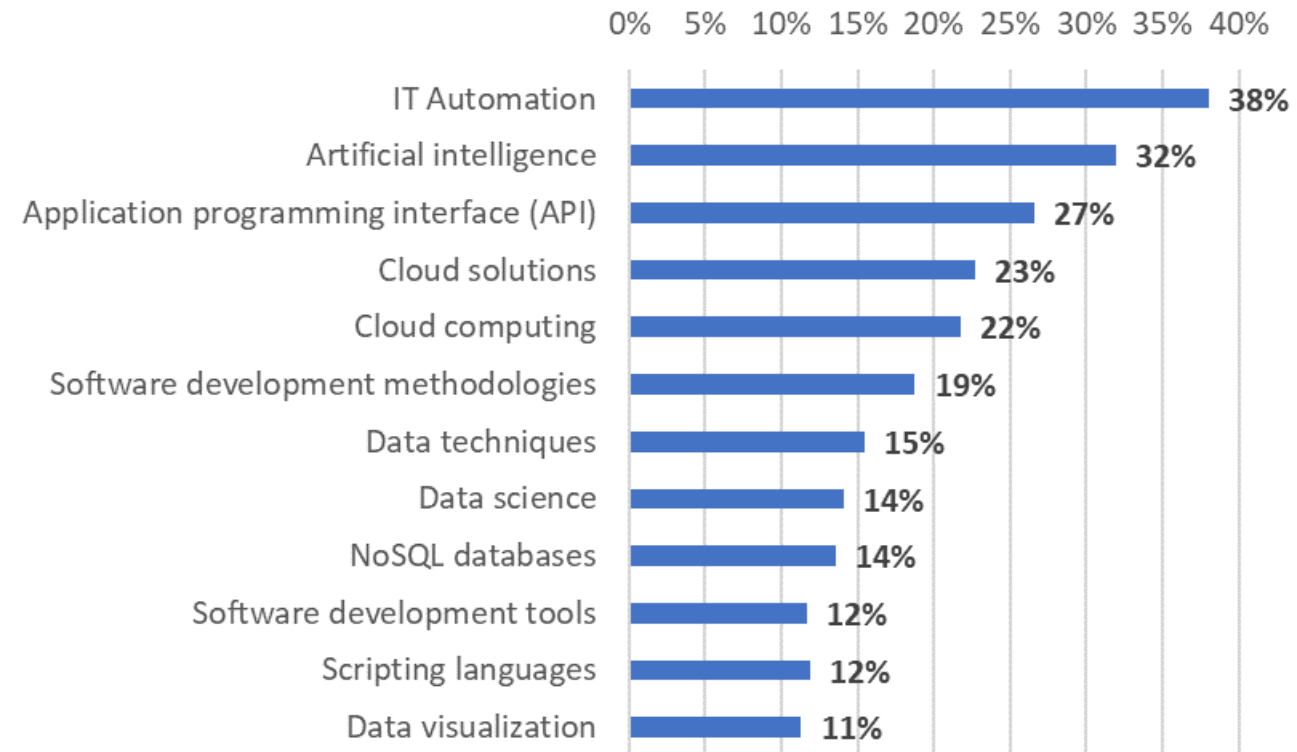
Note: National and Asian totals refer to persons ages 16 and older. Gender breakdowns are not available for Asians. Data for men and women refer to persons ages 20 and older; educational breakdowns refer to persons ages 25 and older.
 Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics



Pandemic-driven increases in technology and automation have reshaped the jobs and skills in demand

- The growing shift to online activity, pandemic-inspired innovations, and greater reliance on advanced technologies have increased the need for **highly skilled workers**
- BUT also growing employer demand for complementary **“human” or “soft” skills** that cannot be automated
- While many jobs in retail and hospitality may not come back, they are likely to be replaced by **emerging jobs** in other industries and occupations
 - IT (network systems, cyber security, robotics/AI, data science)
 - Medical and health science
 - Logistics and supply chains
 - Green jobs

Percent change in the share of selected skill cluster mentions in job ads for tech occupations from 2019 (prepandemic) to the last 12 months ending in March 2021



Note: The HWOL dataset, provided by Burning Glass Technologies, identifies individual skills mentioned in online job ads and groups them into skill clusters. These skills and skill clusters are then calculated as a share for select occupations to determine which skills are mentioned more in online job ads relative to others in those same occupations.

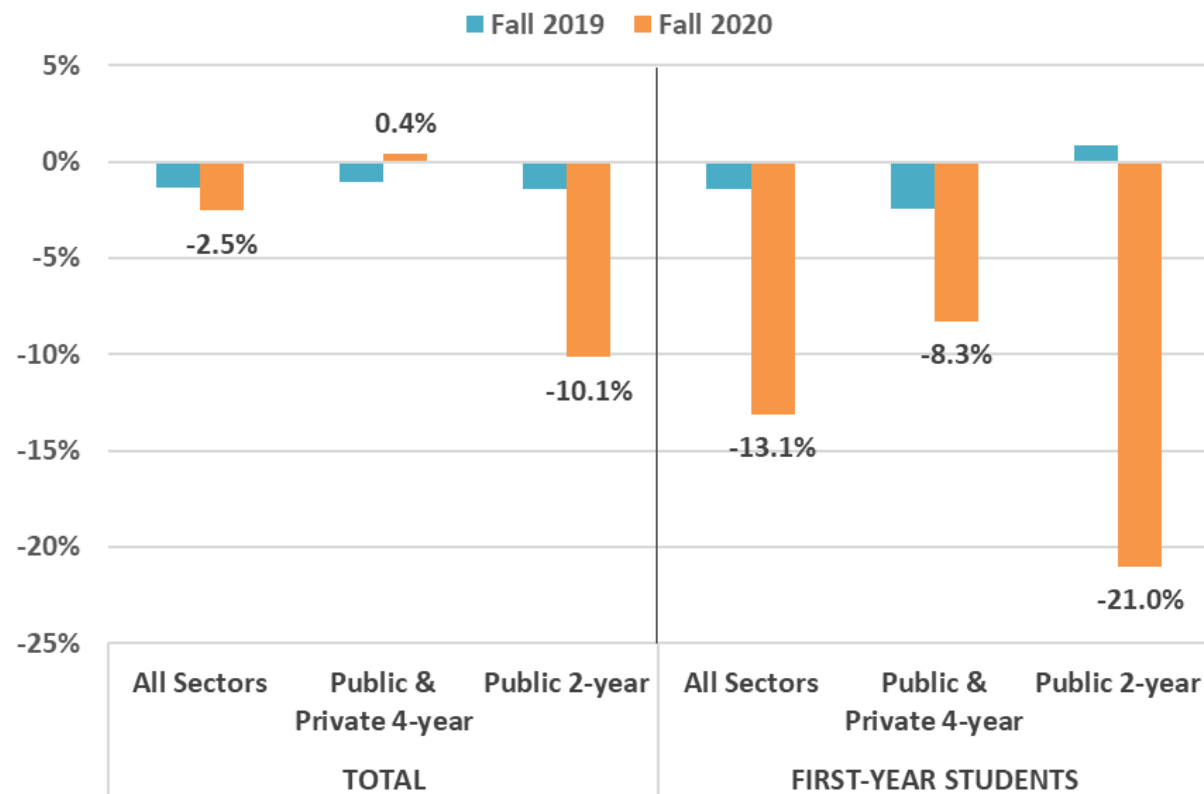
Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) data series



The real policy challenge is not mass unemployment but helping workers transition to new industries, skills, and occupations

- BUT falling college enrollment during the pandemic, especially in community colleges, is making it **harder for at-risk workers to learn new skills**
- Two-year colleges serve as an **alternative gateway** into the workforce
 - Short-term credentialing programs
 - Job placement via apprenticeships
- We could potentially see a cohort that will enter the workforce with **lower education, lower skills, less employability, and lower productivity and earnings**

Percent change in enrollment from previous year by institutional sector



Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center [Current Term Enrollment Estimates Fall 2020](#) and calculations by The Conference Board



Recommendations for a Collaborative Training Plan

Business Leaders

- Identify and fill worker **skill gaps** and facilitate **career mobility** by:
 - ✓ Preparing **strategic assessments** of emerging technologies and mapping the skills and roles needed to apply them
 - ✓ Redesigning HR processes to **show employees** clear career pathways, the skills they require, and how to attain them
 - ✓ Embracing **competency-based** hiring and promotion models (i.e., sourcing skills not degrees)

Business Leaders in Partnership with Training Providers and Educators

- Establish new, community-based **skill-development and career pathways** by:
 - ✓ Designing **curricula and training programs** for in-demand jobs and skills
 - ✓ Engaging with **public workforce boards** or **employer-driven regional consortiums** to improve the quality of publicly supported training pathways
 - ✓ Participating in **sector-based initiatives** that deliver on-the-job learning experiences

Public Policy Leaders

- Incentivize **collaboration and reform** of public workforce development by:
 - ✓ Creating **incentives for unemployed workers** to upgrade their skills
 - ✓ Supporting unemployed workers in maintaining **broadband access**
 - ✓ Redirecting existing federal support of postsecondary skilling efforts to **more efficient or innovative uses**
 - ✓ Expanding opportunities for **learn-and-earn models of training**, such as apprenticeships



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Moderator

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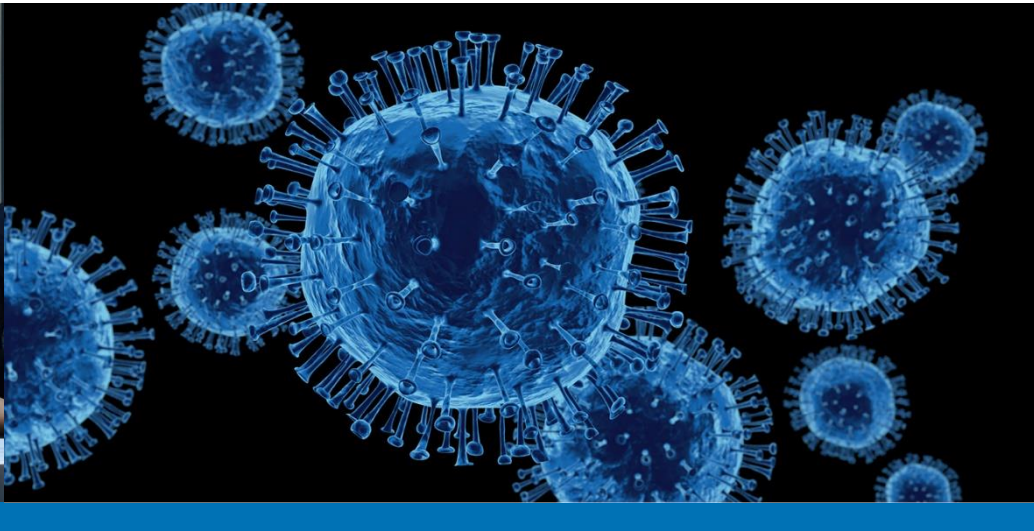


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