



OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

ALBUQUERQUE, NM

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



103 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

1

REGISTERED NURSES

Annual Median Wage: **\$72,700**
Opportunity Employment: **7,600**

2

HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$39,000**
Opportunity Employment: **3,700**

3

GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$98,800**
Opportunity Employment: **2,900**

4

SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$37,200**
Opportunity Employment: **2,800**

5

SUPERVISORS OF OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$50,900**
Opportunity Employment: **2,700**

6

ELECTRICIANS

Annual Median Wage: **\$47,000**
Opportunity Employment: **2,000**

7

POLICE AND SHERIFF'S PATROL OFFICERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$57,600**
Opportunity Employment: **1,900**

8

SUPERVISORS OF CONSTRUCTION TRADES AND EXTRACTION WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$52,200**
Opportunity Employment: **1,700**

9

PLUMBERS, PIPEFITTERS, AND STEAMFITTERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$44,600**
Opportunity Employment: **1,400**

10

OPERATING ENGINEERS AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

Annual Median Wage: **\$37,400**
Opportunity Employment: **1,300**



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF PHILADELPHIA

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
of CLEVELAND



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BANK
of ATLANTA

Sources: Authors' calculations using data from BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2017), Burning Glass Technologies (2015–2017), BEA Regional Price Parities (2016), and American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2012–2016). Values are rounded to the nearest 100. Occupations are ranked on unrounded opportunity employment values.

For more information, read "Opportunity Occupations Revisited: Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time" by Kyle Fee, Keith Wardrip, and Lisa Nelson and published by the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Philadelphia, 2019 (available at www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports). The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, or the Federal Reserve System.



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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

BOULDER, CO

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



113 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

1

REGISTERED NURSES

Annual Median Wage: **\$74,900**
Opportunity Employment: **2,200**

2

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$43,800**
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

3

BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS

Annual Median Wage: **\$44,800**
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

4

SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES

Annual Median Wage: **\$53,300**
Opportunity Employment: **900**

5

COMPUTER USER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

Annual Median Wage: **\$57,500**
Opportunity Employment: **900**

6

SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$46,800**
Opportunity Employment: **700**

7

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS

Annual Median Wage: **\$44,500**
Opportunity Employment: **700**

8

SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WHOLESALE AND MANUFACTURING

Annual Median Wage: **\$64,500**
Opportunity Employment: **700**

9

GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$133,700**
Opportunity Employment: **700**

10

MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Annual Median Wage: **\$41,800**
Opportunity Employment: **600**



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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



100 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$70,500
Opportunity Employment: 3,100</p> | <p>2 CARPENTERS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,200
Opportunity Employment: 1,900</p> |
| <p>3 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES
Annual Median Wage: \$51,600
Opportunity Employment: 1,800</p> | <p>4 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$37,700
Opportunity Employment: 1,700</p> |
| <p>5 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,200
Opportunity Employment: 1,600</p> | <p>6 ELECTRICIANS
Annual Median Wage: \$55,100
Opportunity Employment: 1,500</p> |
| <p>7 AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS
Annual Median Wage: \$49,600
Opportunity Employment: 1,300</p> | <p>8 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$105,900
Opportunity Employment: 1,200</p> |
| <p>9 COMPUTER USER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS
Annual Median Wage: \$53,600
Opportunity Employment: 1,100</p> | <p>10 POLICE AND SHERIFF'S PATROL OFFICERS
Annual Median Wage: \$71,600
Opportunity Employment: 1,100</p> |

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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

DENVER-AURORA-LAKEWOOD, CO

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



84 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$72,900
Opportunity Employment: 15,300</p> | <p>2 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$47,200
Opportunity Employment: 12,200</p> |
| <p>3 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$41,800
Opportunity Employment: 10,100</p> | <p>4 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES
Annual Median Wage: \$59,500
Opportunity Employment: 9,600</p> |
| <p>5 ELECTRICIANS
Annual Median Wage: \$50,300
Opportunity Employment: 9,000</p> | <p>6 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WHOLESALE AND MANUFACTURING
Annual Median Wage: \$64,900
Opportunity Employment: 7,500</p> |
| <p>7 CARPENTERS
Annual Median Wage: \$46,200
Opportunity Employment: 7,000</p> | <p>8 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$44,700
Opportunity Employment: 6,800</p> |
| <p>9 SECURITIES, COMMODITIES, AND FINANCIAL SERVICES SALES AGENTS
Annual Median Wage: \$55,700
Opportunity Employment: 6,300</p> | <p>10 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$133,200
Opportunity Employment: 6,000</p> |

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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

FORT COLLINS, CO

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



88 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

1

REGISTERED NURSES

Annual Median Wage: **\$68,600**
Opportunity Employment: **1,800**

2

HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$41,100**
Opportunity Employment: **1,200**

3

PLUMBERS, PIPEFITTERS, AND STEAMFITTERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$48,400**
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

4

BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS

Annual Median Wage: **\$39,100**
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

5

SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$43,500**
Opportunity Employment: **900**

6

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS

Annual Median Wage: **\$49,100**
Opportunity Employment: **800**

7

CARPENTERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$44,800**
Opportunity Employment: **800**

8

SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WHOLESALE AND MANUFACTURING

Annual Median Wage: **\$58,000**
Opportunity Employment: **800**

9

ELECTRICIANS

Annual Median Wage: **\$56,500**
Opportunity Employment: **700**

10

GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$95,700**
Opportunity Employment: **700**



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FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF CLEVELAND



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF ATLANTA

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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

KANSAS CITY, MO-KS

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SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



10 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 SECRETARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS
Annual Median Wage: \$35,400
Opportunity Employment: 18,000</p> | <p>2 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$64,500
Opportunity Employment: 16,300</p> |
| <p>3 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$45,700
Opportunity Employment: 16,000</p> | <p>4 ASSEMBLERS AND FABRICATORS
Annual Median Wage: \$38,300
Opportunity Employment: 14,900</p> |
| <p>5 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$37,500
Opportunity Employment: 9,400</p> | <p>6 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,700
Opportunity Employment: 7,400</p> |
| <p>7 CONSTRUCTION LABORERS
Annual Median Wage: \$38,600
Opportunity Employment: 7,200</p> | <p>8 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$36,300
Opportunity Employment: 5,900</p> |
| <p>9 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$105,200
Opportunity Employment: 5,800</p> | <p>10 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WHOLESALE AND MANUFACTURING
Annual Median Wage: \$57,600
Opportunity Employment: 5,200</p> |

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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

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SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



40 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$62,500
Opportunity Employment: 9,100</p> | <p>2 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$40,000
Opportunity Employment: 8,400</p> |
| <p>3 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$36,800
Opportunity Employment: 6,100</p> | <p>4 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$34,600
Opportunity Employment: 4,900</p> |
| <p>5 SUPERVISORS OF OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$51,100
Opportunity Employment: 4,100</p> | <p>6 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$93,600
Opportunity Employment: 3,800</p> |
| <p>7 LICENSED PRACTICAL AND LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$40,700
Opportunity Employment: 3,700</p> | <p>8 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES
Annual Median Wage: \$41,200
Opportunity Employment: 3,000</p> |
| <p>9 EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS
Annual Median Wage: \$43,500
Opportunity Employment: 2,900</p> | <p>10 AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS
Annual Median Wage: \$38,700
Opportunity Employment: 2,800</p> |

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Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS, NE-IA

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SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



35 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,400
Opportunity Employment: 12,900</p> | <p>2 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$61,700
Opportunity Employment: 8,300</p> |
| <p>3 CARPENTERS
Annual Median Wage: \$40,900
Opportunity Employment: 4,100</p> | <p>4 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,300
Opportunity Employment: 4,000</p> |
| <p>5 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$37,500
Opportunity Employment: 3,800</p> | <p>6 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$89,800
Opportunity Employment: 2,800</p> |
| <p>7 ELECTRICIANS
Annual Median Wage: \$48,300
Opportunity Employment: 2,700</p> | <p>8 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$38,300
Opportunity Employment: 2,700</p> |
| <p>9 SUPERVISORS OF OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$52,800
Opportunity Employment: 2,300</p> | <p>10 PLUMBERS, PIPEFITTERS, AND STEAMFITTERS
Annual Median Wage: \$59,900
Opportunity Employment: 2,200</p> |

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OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

TULSA, OK

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SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



20 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$60,000
Opportunity Employment: 6,500</p> | <p>2 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$41,500
Opportunity Employment: 5,700</p> |
| <p>3 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$39,700
Opportunity Employment: 4,200</p> | <p>4 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$34,700
Opportunity Employment: 3,700</p> |
| <p>5 WELDERS, CUTTERS, SOLDERERS, AND BRAZERS
Annual Median Wage: \$44,700
Opportunity Employment: 3,300</p> | <p>6 LICENSED PRACTICAL AND LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$41,500
Opportunity Employment: 2,400</p> |
| <p>7 SUPERVISORS OF OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$49,400
Opportunity Employment: 2,200</p> | <p>8 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$95,600
Opportunity Employment: 2,100</p> |
| <p>9 MACHINISTS
Annual Median Wage: \$44,100
Opportunity Employment: 2,100</p> | <p>10 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES
Annual Median Wage: \$46,200
Opportunity Employment: 2,000</p> |

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OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

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WICHITA, KS

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SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



17 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 AIRCRAFT STRUCTURE, SURFACES, RIGGING, AND SYSTEMS ASSEMBLERS
Annual Median Wage: \$54,700
Opportunity Employment: 7,600</p> | <p>2 REGISTERED NURSES
Annual Median Wage: \$55,100
Opportunity Employment: 4,500</p> |
| <p>3 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$34,900
Opportunity Employment: 3,100</p> | <p>4 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS
Annual Median Wage: \$41,300
Opportunity Employment: 3,100</p> |
| <p>5 BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS
Annual Median Wage: \$35,600
Opportunity Employment: 2,500</p> | <p>6 INSPECTORS, TESTERS, SORTERS, SAMPLERS, AND WEIGHERS
Annual Median Wage: \$49,100
Opportunity Employment: 2,400</p> |
| <p>7 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS
Annual Median Wage: \$36,300
Opportunity Employment: 1,900</p> | <p>8 INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY MECHANICS
Annual Median Wage: \$57,600
Opportunity Employment: 1,800</p> |
| <p>9 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS
Annual Median Wage: \$90,900
Opportunity Employment: 1,500</p> | <p>10 ELECTRICIANS
Annual Median Wage: \$55,300
Opportunity Employment: 1,400</p> |

Sources: Authors' calculations using data from BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2017), Burning Glass Technologies (2015–2017), BEA Regional Price Parities (2016), and American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2012–2016). Values are rounded to the nearest 100. Occupations are ranked on unrounded opportunity employment values.

For more information, read "Opportunity Occupations Revisited: Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time" by Kyle Fee, Keith Wardrip, and Lisa Nelson and published by the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Philadelphia, 2019 (available at www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports). The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, or the Federal Reserve System.