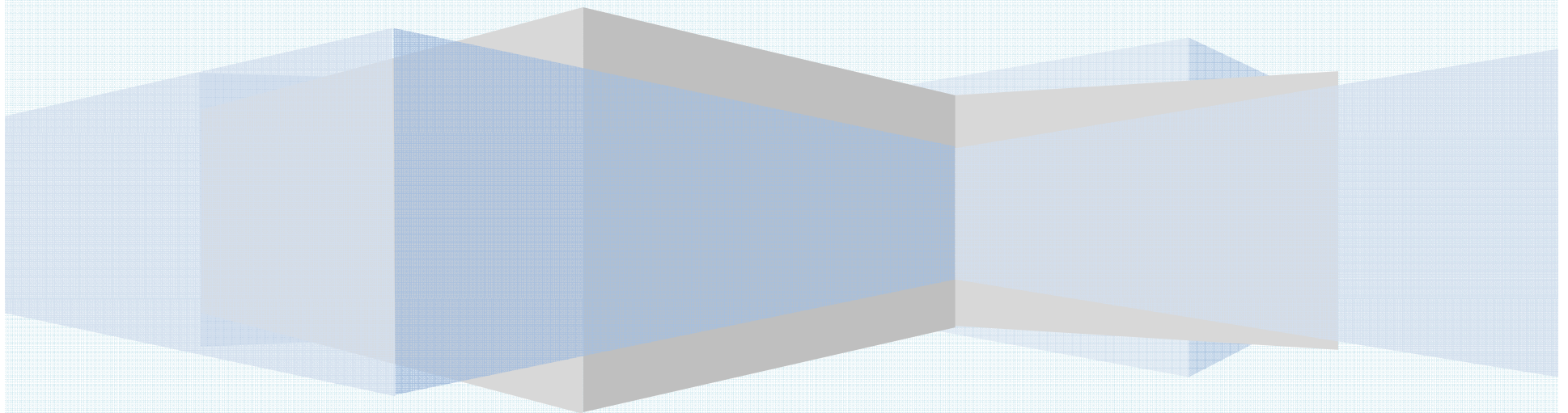


# Closing the Gaps to Build the Future

Improving Workforce Development in the  
National Capital Region

A report by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

January 2010



## A Recommitment to Workforce Development

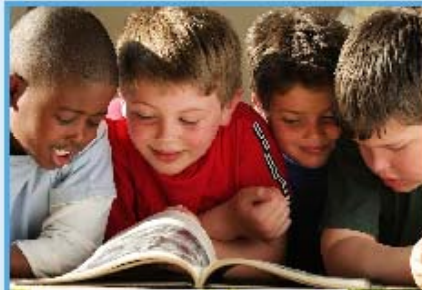
Economic uncertainty.  
Increased competition.  
Evolving industry.

In 2009, the COG Board took action to help the region prepare for and adapt to a changing economy by creating a **Task Force on Workforce Competitiveness**

**Challenge: Better prepare, retain, and retrain the region's workforce.**

*The jobs of the new economy are going to be filled; we want to make sure that they are filled by residents of the National Capital Region.*

**The  
Workforce  
Development  
Continuum**



**Youth**



**Young  
Adult**



**Adult**



**Lifelong  
Learning**

## A Dual-Customer Approach

An effective workforce development program focuses on the needs of employers *and* workers.

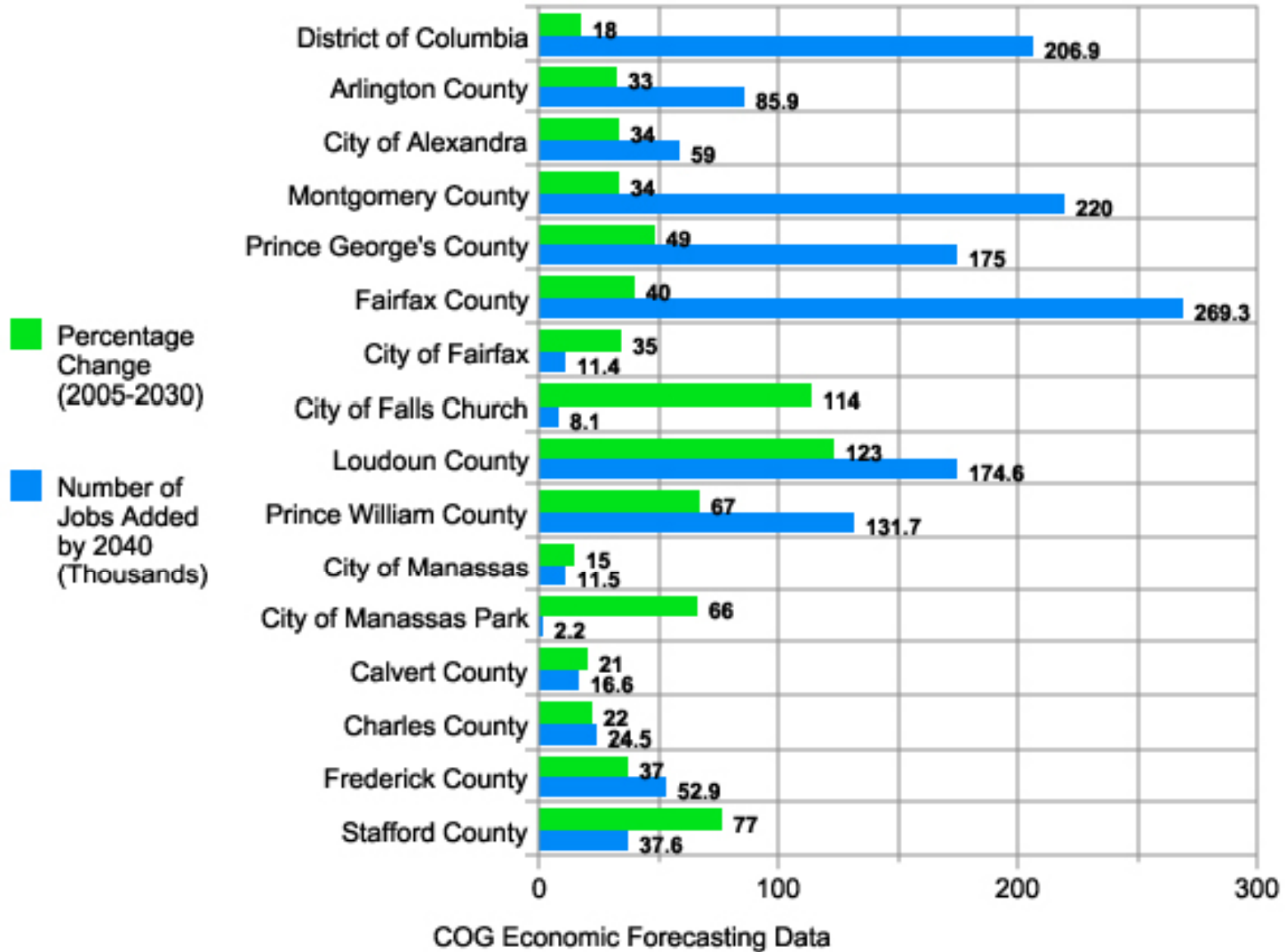


## Regional Snapshot

- **5th-largest** regional economy
- **½ adult residents hold a bachelor's degree**; 16 of the 100 highest-performing high schools in the country located here
- By 2030 the region will create **1.2 million new jobs** and be home to **1.6 million new residents**
- **$\frac{2}{3}$  of all new jobs** in the region are projected to be in middle- to high-skill jobs

**Challenge: To expand prosperity and advancement opportunities to all of the region's residents.**

### Employment Growth by Jurisdiction



Closing the Gaps to Build the Future: Improving Workforce Development in the National Capital Region

## An Integrated, Regional Approach

### **Need:**

The region must simultaneously meet the demands of a middle- to high-skill knowledge economy, while also providing an environment in which low-skill workers can achieve self sufficiency.

### **Opportunity:**

Collaboration.

Alignment.

Integration.

**Challenge: Creating and implementing an inclusive, multi-jurisdictional workforce development strategy for the NCR.**



## Task Force Priority: Youth Education & Career Preparation

- **Align and collaborate** on creation and implementation of standards
- **Enhance career preparation** for college and non-college bound students
- **Ensure success of all students** by focusing on barriers



***In the face of shrinking budgets, it is especially important to remain focused on continuing to support programs that increase students' ability to succeed in both school and eventual employment.***



## Task Force Priority: Adult Development & Re-development

- **Coordinate and collaborate** for effective use of resources and excellent outcomes
- **Align** standards and goals
- **Promote** transferability of credentials
- **Train** for strong industries/occupations in the region
- **Ensure access** to adult education and training
- **Reduce barriers** to success in education and training



***Workforce development must meet the needs of two key constituencies: employers and members of the workforce. These two groups have common interests which can and should converge.***

## Task Force Priority: Integrating Economic Development

- **Focus economic development** strategies on businesses that will generate good jobs and opportunity for advancement and mobility
- **Ensure** robust career lattices
- **Align** economic development and workforce development more fully; nest workforce development within the regional growth strategy
- **Coordinate** economic development efforts



*Although, traditionally, economic development experts have focused on the need to replace declining industries with more competitive ones, there is a more recent focus on occupations and the jobs local workers*

## COG's Commitment & Next Steps

### ***Short Term***

**Convening** a large forum of employers, education, workforce development and economic development stakeholders to identify particular industries or occupations with the key ingredients for further action.

**Leveraging** the resources in the region, including the federal government and **integrating** workforce development priorities into COG's new focus on partnership with the federal government as well as the *Region Forward* plan.

### ***Long Term***

**Implementing** Industry Skill Panels (ISPs)

**Developing** a regional collection of information detailing available workforce development services

**Developing** a single regional standard for "college readiness"

**Determining** why certain businesses engage in workforce development initiatives/programs.



## a call to action

We are at a **critical point** in our economy: we can continue down the same path and expect the same outcomes, or we can change course and realize a more sustainable and competitive workforce.

This report marks the first time that the National Capital Region has addressed workforce development at the regional level. We have taken the **first step** to understand the needs and challenges of both our workers and our employers and have identified best practices and potential models for replication.

We have begun the dialogue. **It is now up to you**, the region's leaders, to take this information and continue the discussion; to come up with better ways to integrate your different but inherently interrelated needs and goals.