

Study: Harder to survive recession without college degree

By Eric Hoover, Chronicle of Higher Education

Weathering the recession with a college degree can be tough. Weathering it without one is much tougher.

That's the main finding of a new report based on a study by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. According to a report on the findings, the vast majority of jobs lost during and after the recession were held by workers with no more than a high-school diploma.

On the flip side of the job-loss equation, most gains during the recovery came in the form of jobs filled by workers with at least some postsecondary education. "The gradual shift to more educated workers has been going on for decades," the report concludes, "but the recession gave it a mighty push."

In this season of high anxiety about the economy and the costs of attending college, politicians and pundits have questioned whether college, in any form, is worth the money. The new report—which analyzes the effects of recession and recovery by education level, gender, industry, and occupation—offers a forceful answer.

"In jobs at every skill level and in many different occupations, the better-educated applicant has the edge," the report concludes. "For workers, the findings point the way to acquiring the skills that the market needs and values. For students and their parents who are contemplating whether higher education is a good value, these findings make clear that the answer is a resounding yes."

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