

The Career Path Less Taken
Half-hour documentary

Summary

For decades, school officials and parents have promoted 4-year-colleges as the next step for high school graduates.

“A college degree is the only way you’ll succeed!”

And yet. . .

Economic change and emerging technologies are reshaping the workplace. According to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, continuing workforce shortages in critical fields, including computer technology, health care services, and advanced manufacturing, threatens the nation’s global competitiveness and increase firms’ incentive to offshore operations. Those fields also are among the most common ones in Ohio facing a labor shortage. And yet, those fields offer a range of high-growth, in-demand jobs that do not require a 4-year bachelor’s degree.

Myths about “vo-tech” and misperceptions about Career and Technical Education (CTE) continue to linger, as evidenced by National Center of Education Statistics. They show the number of Associate’s degrees awarded nationwide has stalled since the 2011-12 school year, while the number of bachelor’s degrees keeps climbing, contributing to the dire skills gap and labor shortage we now face. CTE enrollment in Ohio shows a similar story: Of the more than 513,740 Ohio students enrolled in public high schools, just 125,000 are participating in CTE programs, according to the education advocacy group Advance CTE.

American economic growth is highly dependent on the quality and quantity of workers but at the current production rate, this country will fall short by *5 million workers with appropriate postsecondary education*. In order to effect change, myths must be debunked and stereotypes need to be shattered. To navigate the changing economic landscape and the emerging picture of 21st century jobs, Ohio parents and students need an accurate picture of career-technical education programs, demonstrating the steps that all students can take to pursue a *range* of post-secondary credentials.

The Career Path Less Taken will offer clear explanations of intricate data, along with insights from experts in the fields of education, economics, workforce development, and high-growth industries facing labor shortages who are striving to better align Ohio’s education system with the needs of its workforce and economy. The program can connect complex dots to reveal a vital picture of the job market of the future, in order to equip young people and their parents with the information they need to make more informed decisions about options during and after high school. Ultimately, viewers will learn how young people can take advantage of career opportunities in high-demand, high-growth, and high-paying fields, and help demonstrate the value of career and technical education to students, parents, employers and the economy.

The statewide air date is September 5, 2019. For more information contact: Celena Roebuck, celena.roebuck@ideastream.org. Please consider making plans to host a community watch party in your school/community on September 5th for the premiere or after the premiere for an upcoming school/community event. Contact [Celena Roebuck](#), Manager of Educational Content to learn more and gain access to our digital toolkit and more.