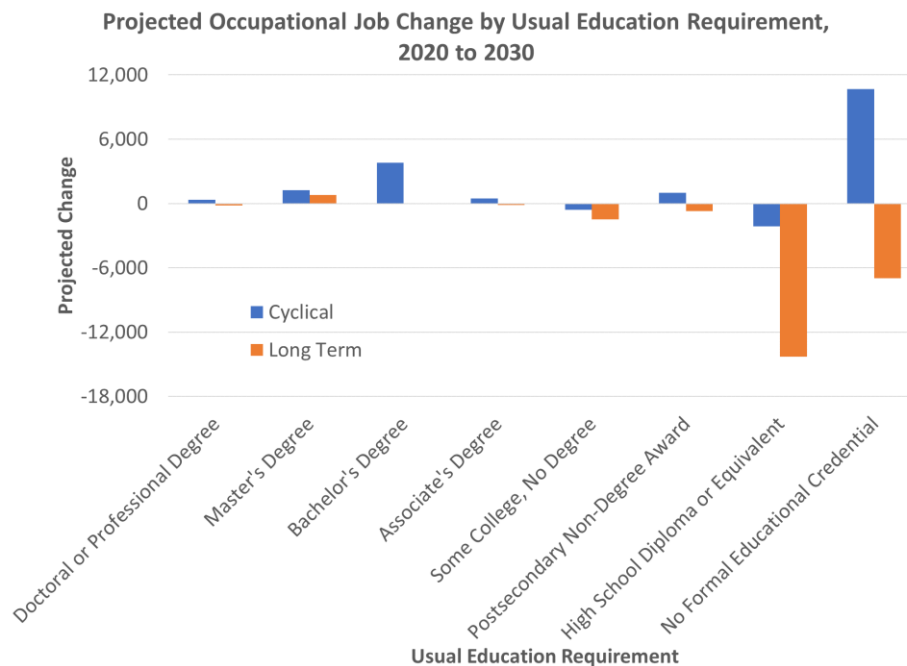


## Employment Outlook by Education Requirement to 2030

Changes in the population will gradually shift the size and composition of the labor force in the decade through 2030 (described [here](#)). Changes in the number of jobs among industries and occupations will gradually shift the composition of employment in the decade (described [here](#) and [here](#)). The combination of these trends will shape the educational needs of employers and of the labor force, which is the focus of this article.

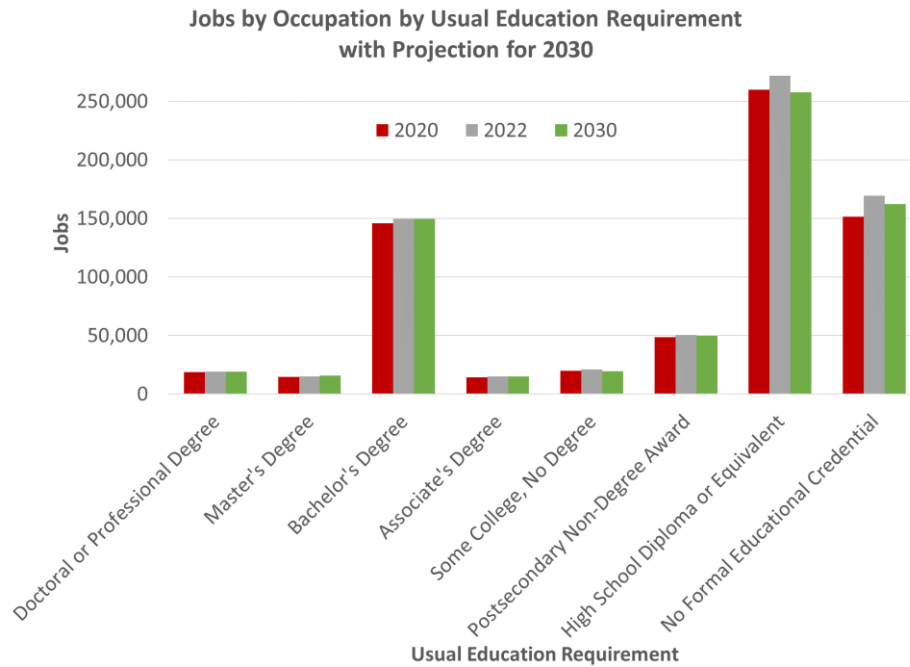
Employment in 2020, our base year, was suppressed by the onset of the pandemic. Job numbers had recovered to pre-pandemic levels by 2022. Like in the previous articles, an evaluation of expected job change by usual education requirement must distinguish the temporary, cyclical aspects of change – that have already occurred – from the long-term trend expected to prevail for the remainder of the decade.

The cyclical recovery from the pandemic spurred a rebound in jobs in many occupations, especially those that usually require a bachelor's degree or higher and those with no formal credential requirement. Little change is expected from 2022 to 2030 for jobs that usually require education beyond high school. A decrease in jobs is expected for occupations that typically do not require education beyond high school or have no formal credential requirement. (Occupations with no usual formal education requirement include many of the lowest skill jobs. They also include some highly skilled jobs such as artists, athletes, musicians, and some construction functions that may require high skills, but for which there is not a *usual* training path or credential.)



The structure of employment by education requirement is not expected to change much over the next decade, despite differences in direction or magnitude of change. The share of jobs in occupations that usually require a postsecondary doctoral or professional, master's, bachelor's, or associate's degree are expected to increase from 28 to 29 percent of the total from 2022 to 2030. Combined with jobs in occupations that usually require a certification or postsecondary non-degree award or require some

college with no degree, the share of jobs usually requiring education beyond high school is expected to increase from 38 to 39 percent of jobs.

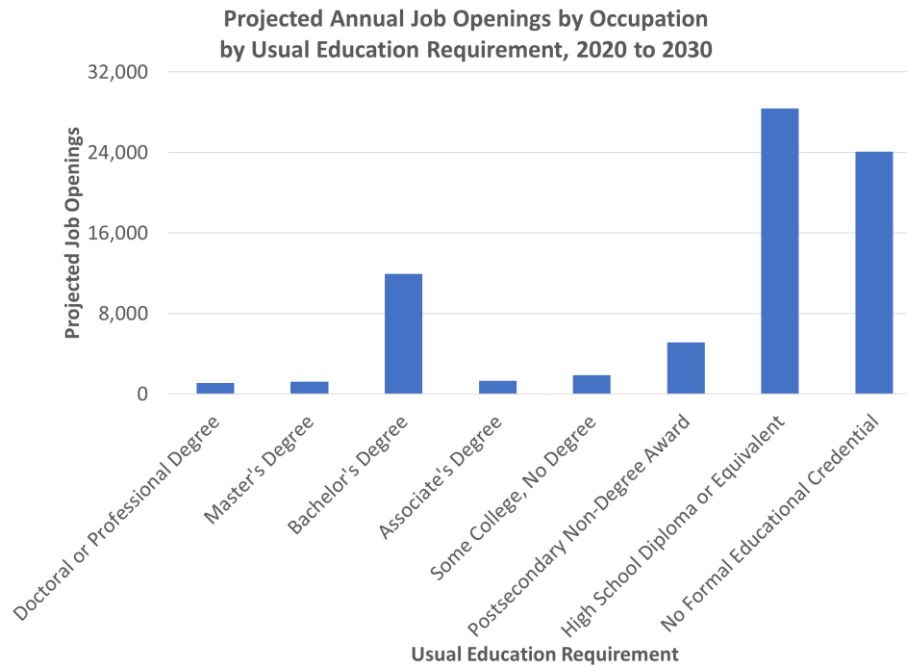


In recent years there have been a couple of popular narratives on higher education as it relates to the labor market. One portrays that a much larger share of the workforce will need a college education in the years ahead. The reality is that it took many decades to reach the point we now are at in which just under one in three jobs are in occupations that usually require a degree. The share is likely to continue to increase by about one or two percentage points per decade – as it long has – rather than spike higher in the next decade.

Another narrative questions whether escalating college costs and resulting debt burdens exceed the return of higher earnings. Though complex and beyond the scope of this brief, programs that develop skills relevant to gaining and succeeding in well-paying occupations clearly lead to a boost in lifetime earnings that exceeds the cost of gaining the degree. Though gains in average earnings experienced by degree holders have exceeded those of other workers over the years, this does not imply that all graduates of all programs will benefit from higher earnings. It also does not imply that college is the only path to a stable career with high earnings.

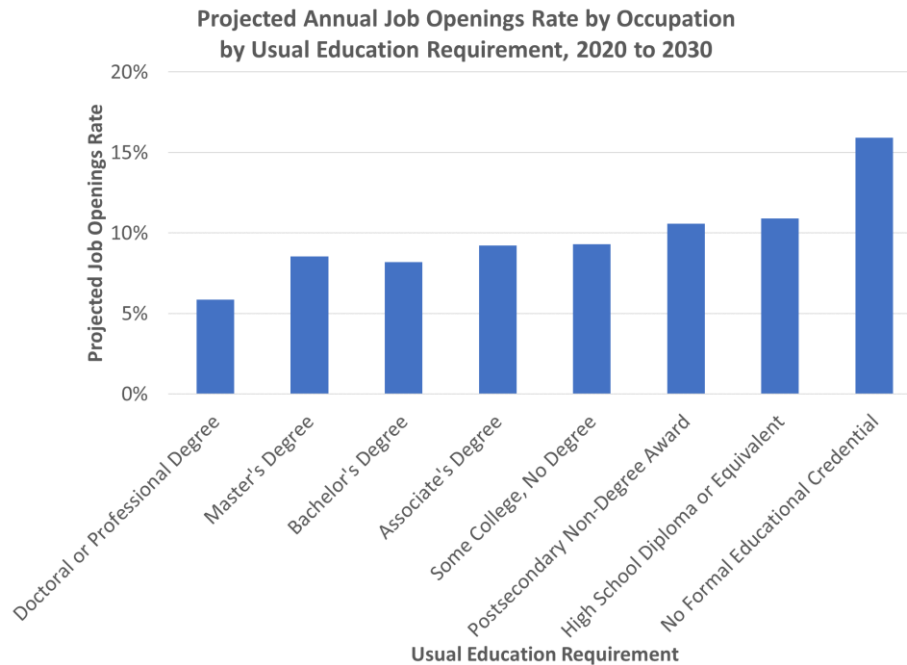
### Job Openings

As noted in the occupational employment outlook article, information to guide career choices has tended to focus on trends: growing occupations are viewed as offering opportunity, and declining occupations more negatively. That focus is too narrow. Though little net job change is expected through 2030, the dynamics of people retiring or otherwise leaving the labor force, young people reaching working-age, others reentering the labor force, and tens of thousands changing jobs will result in large numbers of job openings. The 750,000 job openings expected in the decade through 2030 exceeds the number of jobs that exist today. Whether increasing or decreasing in jobs, virtually every occupation will have openings.



Jobs in occupations that usually require a high school diploma with no additional postsecondary education provide a good example of this dynamism. Though the number of jobs in those occupations is expected to decrease, they are expected to have the largest number of job openings through 2030.

The number of openings by educational requirement is generally related to the number of jobs, with some exceptions. Rates of growth or decline vary, of course, and so do rates of occupational turnover due to exits or transfers. We can generalize that occupations that require advanced or specialized training and that pay well tend to have a more settled workforce with lower rates of turnover and job openings. Occupations with limited education or skill requirements that offer relatively low pay tend to have a younger, less well-established workforce, and much higher rates of worker turnover and job openings.



The labor market changes gradually each year. Over short periods those changes are small; over extended periods they are significant. By the time a person retires the occupational composition of the labor market will be quite different than when they started work as a young person. Additionally, the knowledge and skill requirements of occupations change over time. The penetration of automation, mechanization, and information technology into how we perform tasks has made some occupations obsolete, created entirely new fields of work, and generally changed how a wide range of tasks in most occupations are performed. This will continue in the years ahead. In an ever-evolving environment, it is important for individuals to evaluate their education and keep their job skills up-to-date with the changing needs of employers.

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This has been a very general description of our occupational employment projections to 2030. Detail on over 600 individual occupations, including expected growth or decline, openings, and wages is available at [www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/outlook.html](http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/outlook.html). Users can generate charts or tables for occupations by number of expected job openings, rate of change, or net change by education requirement, and can look at the outlook for individual occupations or groups.