



Press Release

New Study Highlights the Economic Benefits of Educational Attainment

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What is the relationship between obtaining various levels of education—from a professional certification to a doctorate—and employment or earnings? In a new study, AAF President Douglas Holtz-Eakin and Data Analyst Tom Lee quantify the relationships between various types of post-secondary educational attainment and employment opportunities, wage rates, and aggregate economic growth. They find that increasing educational attainment would have powerful positive effects on the economy.

Of note, they find that even for those who do not obtain a bachelor's degree, the employment and wage impacts of obtaining a certification, associate degree, or vocational qualification are significant enough to merit increased policy attention.

Their findings include:

- A high-school dropout with a professional certification is almost 20 percent more likely to be employed than someone with only a high-school diploma;
- If everyone who has at most a high school diploma or a GED went on to receive an associate or vocational degree, 5.9 million more people would be employed, and their annual wages would rise by \$592 billion in aggregate; and
- A 1 percentage-point increase in the growth rate of a state's population with bachelor's degrees is associated with about a 0.08 percentage-point increase in the state's real GDP growth rate.

[Read the study.](#)