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Commentary/Op-Ed - August 2023

Prioritize skills to fill city jobs: NYC should drop the need for a college degree for some posts

In this NY Daily News op-ed, CUF's Jonathan Bowles urges elected officials and Mayor Adams to take the lead in embracing a skills-first approach by removing degree requirements for hundreds or even thousands of city government jobs to open up well-paying public sector jobs to New Yorkers that have been shut out of these opportunities.

by Jonathan Bowles

In a city where 2.3 million people lack a college credential, shifting to skills-based hiring (the practice in which employers eliminate degree requirements for some jobs and instead hire based on an assessment of skills) — even if only for a fraction of jobs in the city's economy — would open up countless well-paying jobs to New Yorkers who would otherwise be excluded for lack of a specific credential. While earning a college credential is still essential for many jobs in today's economy, there is now compelling evidence that many well-paying positions in industries from tech and finance to health care and government could be ably filled by workers who bring considerable skills to the role but are too often screened out because the hiring process doesn't adequately assess underlying skills.

In this op-ed, CUF's Jonathan Bowles urges elected officials and Mayor Adams to take the lead in embracing a skills-first approach by removing degree requirements for hundreds or even thousands of city government jobs to open up well-paying public sector jobs to New Yorkers that have been shut out of these opportunities. Bowles makes the case that this approach would help the city address near-record high employee shortages; complement the city's efforts to strengthen talent pipelines for New Yorkers without college degrees; and will create a blueprint that private-sector companies can use to implement the practice in their own hiring processes.

Read the full op-ed here.

This op-ed builds on CUF's research on the opportunity for skills-based hiring, including *5 Steps For Expanding Skills-based Hiring In New York City*, and "Expanding Skills-Based Hiring in New York."



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