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The Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) of The Council of State Governments has released its most recent *Regional Resource, Scholarship Programs for Associate's Degrees in SLC Member States*.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the United States has maintained a cultural creed that the only path to a middle-class lifestyle is through a four-year bachelor's degree or higher. However, increasing analyses are demonstrating that industries with the highest growth in the next decade will demand skills readily obtainable through a two-year technical education. Moreover, several policy and industry experts have begun raising concerns about the ever-increasing gap between middle-skill jobs (those requiring more than a high school education but less than a four-year degree) and the number of middle-skilled workers available to fill those jobs. These findings, along with evidence indicating that middle-class household incomes are more attainable by those with a member holding at least an associate's degree, are steering SLC policymakers toward creating and expanding programs that increase their technical and community college graduation rates. In that vein, this *SLC Regional Resource* examines efforts by policymakers in selected SLC member states to implement postsecondary scholarships programs specifically targeted at increasing their number of two-year degree graduates.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)

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