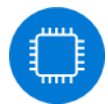


Global recommendations for accelerating skilling to ensure an inclusive economic recovery post-COVID-19 and beyond

Recovering from the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 and getting people from all walks of life back to work as soon as safely possible will require new investments, approaches, and engagement to support workers and businesses. An effective, lasting response will require coordinated action from government and the private sector.

Microsoft and LinkedIn believe there is no time to waste in preparing for this post-COVID-19 economy. Digital transformation has accelerated across all industries and therefore, the post-COVID-19 economy will, in turn, generate many technical and tech-enabled jobs. At the same time, it will exacerbate the digital skills gap facing our nation. Helping individuals gain digital skills and earn in-demand credentials in information technology (IT) can play a significant role in preparing them to succeed in the post-COVID-19 economy and beyond.

Ensuring individuals have, and take advantage of, opportunities to gain the digital skills necessary for these jobs must be a major priority within any nation's economic recovery efforts. Specifically, Microsoft and LinkedIn recommend that countries implement the following policies in response to COVID-19:



1. Invest in individuals to attain key technology skills

- Increase opportunities to attain key technology skills by expanding availability of funding to individuals. Increased access to skills training should include online tools and services that enable life-long learning as well as funding to existing workforce programs focusing on technology and skills.
- Expand investments to meet the accelerating demand for technology-skilled workers and to help individuals acquire the skills for jobs being created in a digital economy.
- Devote an increased proportion of funds to train individuals in high-demand fields.
- Provide successful pathways to jobs through short-term training programs, especially those tied to obtaining technical skills.

- Create Lifelong Learning Accounts, which would allow individual employees, employers, and, in some models, the public sector, to invest in training.
- Support postsecondary education and industry partnerships to develop technology skills training and curricula.
- Include funds to develop focused, short-term training pathways and credentials for workers in relevant fields, including expanded apprenticeship initiatives. This investment should also support workers to earn credentials in the fields relevant to connectivity infrastructure.



2. Incentives for employers to hire and upskill

- Provide incentives for employers to hire new employees and upskill incumbent employees to advance in their career paths.
- Provide incentives for employers to train and upskill incumbent workers.
- Support work-based training programs.
- Support transitional employment, which would provide subsidies for time-limited, wage-paid work experiences.



3. Leverage the power of innovation and data

- Prioritize investments in technology to expand online access to career services. This step would help re-employ individuals quickly.
- Encourage the use of free or low-cost online training courses, such as by covering costs of competency assessments or assessments to earn a recognized credential.
- Analyze data from multiple sources (including assessments and online tools) to identify which skills are likely to lead to in-demand roles.
- Support new and innovative data systems that leverage private sector tools to help workers understand available training and career paths. This investment would make it easier for individuals to differentiate between credentials and search for quality programs that are likely to lead to in-demand and higher-wage jobs. These systems must also be enabled to integrate data across employment, training, and higher education.
- Promote the adoption of interoperable learning records. This format promotes the portability and standardization of personal learning records.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to establish a voluntary system to make job postings more uniform and searchable, which will help individuals connect to relevant positions.