

## Breaking the Generational Poverty Cycle

Poverty that passes from generation to generation persists until a disruption occurs. A successful disruption requires a family member to achieve wealth beyond living paycheck-to-paycheck. Even more successfully disruptive is when financial success enables saving for the future and investing in a home and other money-making assets.

You've likely heard stories of naturally gifted athletes or performers with impoverished childhoods who finding success through tireless work and the requisite amount of luck. However, these stories are anomalies and not a reasonably viable path to pursue. What is reasonable—with the requisite support services to break financial barriers to entry—is to pursue a career path that allows for the greatest chance for sustained employment, wages of at least \$20/hour, and opportunities for advancement.

## Occupations with Income-Elevating Potential

The most promising occupations include software developers, registered nurses, and accountants. In Georgia, these occupations each pay, on average, more than \$40/hour and are anticipated to have among the most net new job growth over the next 10 years. But hiring requirements for these occupations typically include a bachelor's degree. This can be very cost-prohibitive for first-generation college students who may also have transportation and child care needs, not to mention the barrier of tuition costs and foregoing four years of full-time paid work to attend classes and study.

Fields with lower educational attainment requirements are more realistic to pursue. For example, growing occupations that typically require no more than a high school diploma or equivalent include welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (average \$23/hour in Georgia), maintenance and repair workers (\$22), and industrial truck and tractor operators (\$21).

Higher earnings potential exists when one is able to pursue a certificate, credential, or associate's degree (which ranges from only one to four semesters). Growth occupations with one of these requirements include computer user support specialist (\$30), truck driver (\$27), licensed practical or licensed vocational nurse (\$27), and HVAC mechanic (\$26).

## Workforce Development Support is Available

While the prevalence of online classes has alleviated some transportation and child care difficulties, challenges persist for fields such as health care and technical work whose educational requirements include hands-on learning. Online classes can also create challenges with respect to a reliably working computer and internet service.

From the [12 federally-funded workforce development agencies in Middle and North Georgia](#) to nonprofit organizations dedicated to workforce development services, assistance is available. But, there is always a gap in fulfilling the needs of all who are working to break their family's generational poverty.

ECF invites parishes in our Diocese to think creatively about how they can help families break generational poverty by pursuing a credential or certificate in a promising career field. Whether that is eligibility-driven child care, transportation, textbooks, or even tuition support, our parishes and their nonprofit partners can provide assistance to [reverse the cycle of generational poverty](#).

Sources: [Georgia Dept. of Labor, Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032](#); [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages](#).



Following Christ's example and the tradition of The Episcopal Church, we partner with Episcopal communities in the Diocese of Atlanta by providing funding, leadership, and resources to enable Episcopalians to lift up people facing poverty and oppression and to achieve significant, long-lasting change in our communities.

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