

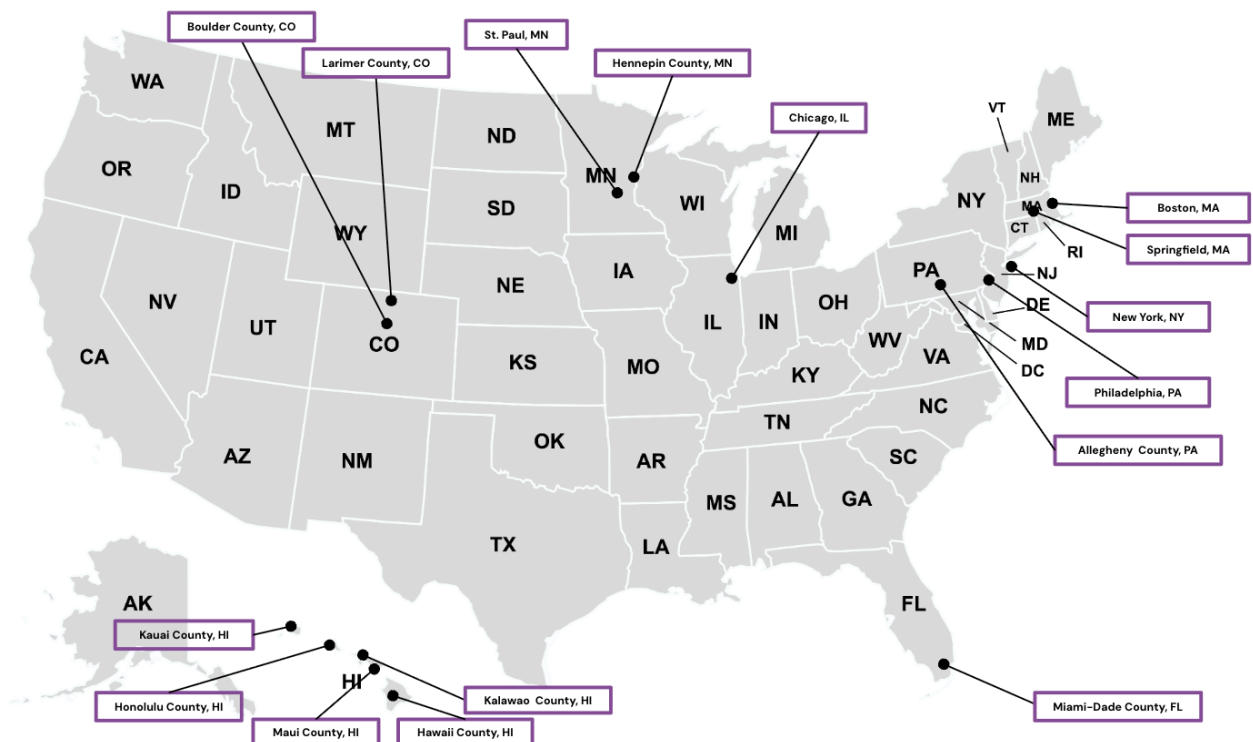
Local Approaches to Tear the Paper Ceiling

Local Leadership to Date

City and county governments are taking steps to remove unnecessary degree requirements and prioritize skills in hiring. These efforts are helping expand access to good jobs for STARs – workers skilled through alternative routes. This overview highlights different local approaches to eliminating degree requirements and emphasizes the key features of each strategy.

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To date, we have tracked fifteen cities and counties that have committed to removing unnecessary degree requirements or advancing skills-based talent practices.



Four Local Approaches

Approaches to State Legislation

Hawaii: The State of Hawaii [passed legislation](#) to prohibit state and county governments in Hawaii from requiring a bachelor's degree as a condition to employment. This legislation applies to Hawaii's four counties: Hawaii County, Honolulu County, Kauai County, and Maui County.

Approaches to City Ordinances & Executive Orders

Chicago: The Chicago City Council passed an [ordinance](#) to amend the municipal code, allowing work experience, vocational training, or military service to substitute for a college degree in most city jobs. The City of Chicago then followed up with an [executive order](#) removing degree requirements for city jobs and moving toward skills-based hiring.

Approaches to County Initiatives and Programs

Hennepin County: Hennepin County in Minnesota removed degrees for county jobs and launched the [Pathways](#) program to recruit new skills for critical roles and build a representative workforce.

Approaches to City Executive Orders

Philadelphia: The City of Philadelphia issued an [executive order](#) removing unnecessary degree requirements for city jobs and launched the City College of Municipal Employment (CCME) to train residents for high-need roles in city government.

St. Paul: In a State of the City Address, former Mayor Melvin Carter [ordered](#) the City of St. Paul to eliminate degree requirements for 90 percent of city job titles.

New York: The City of New York launched the [Jobs NYC initiative](#), which included removing degree requirements for certain city jobs and moving toward skills-based hiring.

Resources & Support

- **O@W Templates:** [Model Executive Order](#) and [Model Legislation](#)
- **O@W Research:** [“Tearing The Paper Ceiling: The Impact Of State Commitments To Remove Degree Requirements On Public Awareness And Job Opportunities For STARs.”](#)
- **O@W Case Study:** [“From a Billboard to City Hall: How Chicago Tore the Paper Ceiling”](#)
- **O@W Case Study:** [“Building a Talent Pipeline into City Careers: Learnings from the City of Philadelphia’s City College of Municipal Employment.”](#)
- **O@W Playbook:** [Government as an Employer Playbook](#)
- **National League of Cities and AIR:** [Modernizing Municipal Workforces Through Skills-Based Practices](#)