

The Outlook for College Grads In Utah

Better than last year, but not great. Finding a job after graduation in the last two year has been a real challenge for newly-minted diploma holders. Utah and the nation have been under the daunting mantel of the economic downturn for more than three years. The good news is that the economy has turned the corner with positive growth in output and spending. The bad news is that job growth has lagged behind the other positive measures of the overall economy. It's called the "jobless recovery" and we experience it just about every time a recession strikes.

Employers are optimistic but may be cautious about calling back previous workers, or hiring new ones. Instead they help meet increased demand for their products and services by working current employees (the ones they kept because they were the most experienced and most productive) longer hours, and, using temp workers to fill in the gaps.

Jobs in Utah are growing, albeit slowly. We'll see an increase in hiring as we continue into the recovery. The job outlook is positive but job growth will ramp up slowly. The Department has released its industry and occupational projections from 2008 to 2018. These projections reflect the impact of the recession through the significantly slower growth rate of 2.1 percent per year over the 10-year period. The long-term historical growth rate for the state has been about 3.3 percent since the early 1960s. Still, we are pulling out of the doldrums and can expect better job prospects ahead.

Occupations in Demand for Post High School Training

This year I'm including, in addition to a list of occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher, a list of occupations that need applied

technical education (ATE) training and those that call for an associate's degree. The key criteria in the lists is job demand in the form of annual job openings across the state through 2018. DWS makes estimates of job demand for over 700 occupations. More than 300 occupations call for some form of postsecondary education. These jobs account for just about a third of all the job openings. Putting this into perspective of openings, of the 64,000 openings expected per year, 20,000 openings will be occupations that need ATE or higher training.

The occupations in these two lists also have higher wages. As most people know, there is a direct relationship between educational attainment and earnings. Median wages for bachelor's or higher education are about \$31/hour and wages for the ATE/Associates degrees are about \$20/hour.

The Outlook for 2011 Grads is Brighter

Discussions with the heads of career and placement offices on Utah college campuses paint a much more positive tone this year than the previous two years. Even the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in their annual survey said the outlook for employment is getting better this year. ●





See page 21 for
comments from
college career
counselors.

Top Ten Occupations in Demand for Applied Technology or Associate's Degree with Higher Wages

Annual
Job
Openings

Registered Nurses	1160
Computer Support Specialists	440
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	300
Insurance Sales Agents	280
Real Estate Sales Agents	260
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	210
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	160
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	160
Dental Hygienists	150
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	140

Top Ten Occupations in Demand for Bachelor's or Higher Degree

Annual
Job
Openings

General and Operations Managers	700
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	670
Accountants and Auditors	640
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	310
Management Analysts	300
Construction Managers	290
Lawyers	280
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	280
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	280
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	280
Graphic Designers	210
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	180
Public Relations Specialists	170
Instructional Coordinators	160
Training and Development Specialists	160
Computer Programmers	160
Sales Managers	160
Financial Managers	160
Personal Financial Advisors	160
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	160

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services