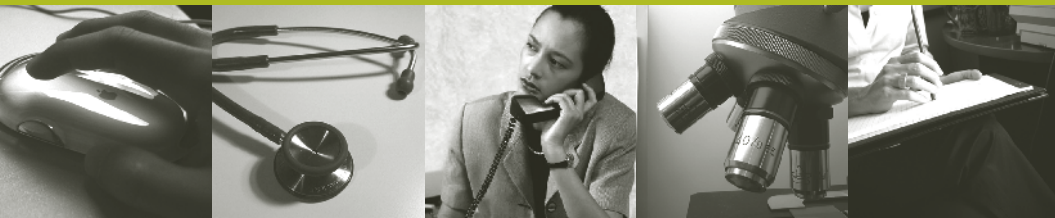


Hot Jobs 2010

Promoting Economic Independence through Informed Career Decisions



Crittenton Women's Union
live work thrive



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HOT JOBS 2010	VACANCIES	WAGE 75 TH PERCENTILE	EDUCATION/ TRAINING REQUIRED
Computer and Data Systems			
Computer Support Specialists	194	\$70,180	AA
Computer Programmers	132	\$100,160	AA or BA
Network Systems and Data Communications	108	\$98,000	AA or BA
Health Care			
Registered Nurses	2,479	\$97,160	AA or BA
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	140	\$78,750	AA
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	104	\$84,210	AA
Dental Hygienists	117	\$85,550	AA
Office and Administrative Support			
First-line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers	101	\$63,880	On-the-job training, work experience in a related field
Protective Services			
Correctional Officers and Jailers	164	\$62,290	AA or on-the-job training
Sales			
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific)	127	\$84,160	AA or BA
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (technical and scientific)	296	\$113,680	AA or BA

TABLE 1

OVERVIEW

In its work helping low-income women transform their lives by achieving economic independence, Crittenton Women's Union (CWU) has come to recognize that job seekers need practical guidance in identifying, preparing for, and obtaining jobs that pay enough to support a family without reliance on public assistance. To help them make informed career decisions, CWU undertakes a triennial survey of the Massachusetts labor market to ascertain which jobs are in high demand in the state and which hold future promise.

The CWU Hot Jobs report has become more critical than ever in the current economic environment. Massachusetts unemployment has risen to its highest rate in more than 30 years, with a loss of more than 136,000 jobs since 2008, according to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. A rebound in job growth is not projected by most economists until at least the end of 2010. Dramatic fluctuations in the labor market since the last Hot Jobs report and the increased cost of living over the past three years have left those seeking to overcome poverty particularly uncertain about what career pathways offer the best opportunities.

Despite today's straitened job market, however, opportunities do exist. The most recent *Massachusetts Department on Workforce Development 2009, 2nd Quarter Job Vacancy Survey* estimates almost 50,000 vacant jobs in the state. More than 40 percent of these jobs are identified as "middle-skill" level, requiring more than a high school education but less than a four-year degree.

CWU defines "Hot Jobs" as careers that require two years or less of post-secondary education, pay a family-sustaining wage, and currently post high vacancy rates. *Hot Jobs 2010* identifies 11 jobs in Massachusetts that meet these criteria.

Each job listed pays a family-sustaining wage at the 75th percentile of the job's wage range (meaning 75% of people are paid at or below the represented wage) and have high vacancy rates (more than 100 openings). The family-sustaining wage was determined using a new budget tool, the Massachusetts Economic Independence Index (Mass. Index)¹. Applying accessible and widely accepted public federal, state, and market rate data, the Mass. Index measures how much a Massa-

chusetts family must earn a year to meet basic expenses (including housing, food, health care, child care, transportation, personal and household needs, and taxes) without supplemental government work supports.

Mass. Index values are calculated by specific geographic locations in the state—at the county level and for the city of Boston—and by specific family configurations, including 410 family types comprised of either one or two working adults and up to six children. According to the Mass. Index, the average annual income requirement for a single-parent family of three in Massachusetts is \$61,618—approximately three and one-half times the federal poverty level of \$18,310. *Hot Jobs 2010* uses this average annual income figure as the wage criterion for determining a Hot Job.

The report also provides information on educational requirements and occupational characteristics for specific Hot Jobs. It details current market trends in high-demand occupational opportunities that pay a family-sustaining wage in Massachusetts, and provides insights into sectors that have positions available currently that may develop into Hot Jobs in the future.

State policymakers will benefit from *Hot Jobs 2010* as they make funding decisions regarding programs like the Educational Rewards Grant Program, which provides education and training grants to help dislocated or low-income workers prepare for family-sustaining jobs. Additionally, *Hot Jobs 2010* was developed for workforce development professionals and low-income workers seeking well-documented career pathways to economic independence. We have produced for the first time *Hot Jobs 2010 Briefs* by employment sector, which provide detailed information about education and training requirements, benefits, salaries, work schedules, and additional resources, available at www.liveworkthrive.org.

Key Findings

- The number of occupations that meet the Hot Jobs criteria is dwindling. In 2007, there were 26 jobs on the Hot Jobs list. In 2010, there are just 11. This is likely due to the combined effect of the recession, rising costs of living, stagnant wages, increased

workplace specialization, and increased demand for post-secondary education and training.

- Nine out of the 11 jobs in *Hot Jobs 2010* were on the 2007 list (see **Table 2**) as well, suggesting they are particularly recession-resilient and thus especially good bets for job seekers. However, the low number of new jobs added to the list suggests very limited new opportunities for middle-skilled workers to earn a family-sustaining wage.
- In 2007, 16 out of 26 Hot Jobs required no post-secondary education. In 2010, two of the eleven jobs require only a high school diploma: correctional officers and supervisors of administrative workers. However, job applicants for these positions who have some post-secondary education will find this beneficial. This clearly illustrates that, in Massachusetts’ increasingly knowledge-based

economy, access to higher education for low-income working adults is a critical anti-poverty strategy.

- The majority of the 2007 Hot Jobs that didn’t meet the criteria in 2010 fell off the list because of low vacancy rates, most likely due to the recession. However, a few jobs no longer met the wage requirements and, in some cases, are now saddled with both low vacancy rates and wages that no longer meet family-sustaining criteria.
- Of the nine Hot Jobs included in both the 2007 and 2010 reports, eight of them have a significantly lower number of vacancies than in the prior report. Some positions, such as registered nurses, experienced a reduction of approximately 50%. Hence, the job market for even these Hot Jobs is tighter during this economic recession, resulting in fewer career pathways out of poverty for middle-skilled workers.

TABLE 2: Recession-Resilient: Occupations in 2007 and 2010 Hot Jobs Reports

Occupational Name
Computer Support Specialists
Correctional Officers and Jailers
Dental Hygienists
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers
Registered Nurses
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (except technical and scientific)
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (technical and scientific)

POTENTIAL HOT JOBS OF THE FUTURE

Two industries offer potential promise for low-wage workers in Massachusetts, so called “green jobs”² in the clean energy industry and jobs in the biotechnology industry. While neither have positions that currently meet the Hot Jobs criteria, they both offer potential opportunities for low-wage workers to enter growing fields and potentially work their way up to family-sustaining positions.

“Green jobs” have been touted by many as the future salvation of the United States economy and labor force. Indeed, many workforce development experts have singled out such jobs as having key potential for entry-level workers—jobs that will not require extensive post-secondary education but will pay a living wage. But there are still many unanswered questions about green jobs. It remains unclear exactly how many of these jobs

will be created in Massachusetts, what they will pay, and what their educational and experience requirements will be. However, as many workforce development experts agree, this is an important area to watch for future opportunities.

Biotechnology and biopharmaceutical companies have a large presence in Massachusetts. According to the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council (www.massbio.org), more than 430 biotechnology companies located in Massachusetts employ approximately 45,905 employees in the state and pay out over \$4 billion in payroll. In contrast to overall Massachusetts employment, which declined by 1.7% from 2001 to 2007, employment in the state's biopharmaceutical industry grew by 42.6% from 2001 to 2008. While the positions in the biotechnology industry that require an associate's degree or less do not meet our Hot Jobs wage criteria, they do represent solid stepping-stone jobs that offer good entry-level wages coupled with comprehensive benefits and advancement opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

Hot Jobs 2010 is based on an in-depth analysis of the U. S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2008 *Annual Report on Occupational and Employment Statistics in Massachusetts*. This occupation list was first filtered for occupations that required an associate's degree or less to pursue. Next, vacancy rates were used to further filter the data and occupations with 100 or fewer vacancies were removed from the list.

Finally, the data was analyzed using both an occupation's wage at the 75th percentile and the Mass. Index state-wide average for a family-sustaining wage for a single-parent family with two children³.

CONCLUSION

The midst of a period of high unemployment is a difficult time to write a report on Hot Jobs. We are bombarded daily with reports on rising unemployment and increased financial hardship. The people hit the hardest during a period like this are always those most vulnerable, with little or no financial safety net, limited education, and limited employment skills.

But even while it is hard to report on diminished opportunities, it is clear that, more than ever, low-income workers need updated guidance about which industries

are holding strong, where the job vacancies are, what employers want in candidates for those positions, and how to invest wisely in education and training for positions that are the most likely to lead to economic independence.

This report and the accompanying occupation-specific briefs (available on www.liveworkthrive.org) are designed to help low-income women identify career pathways leading from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. It is also a guide for policy makers and workforce development professionals in forging additional and accessible routes toward economic independence.

ENDNOTES

1. Prior Hot Jobs reports were based on The Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard (FESS), which was first published by the Women's Union in 1998 and then updated in 2003 and 2006 with partners Diana Pearce and Wider Opportunities for Women. The Standard provided an alternative to the federal poverty guidelines and was widely used by state agencies and nonprofit organizations in the state. In 2009, Crittenton Women's Union contracted with Wider Opportunities for Women to develop an updated budget tool, the Massachusetts Economic Independence Index (Mass. Index). More information about FESS and Mass. Index is available at www.liveworkthrive.org.
2. Green jobs, also called **green-collar jobs**, are, according to the United Nations Environment Program, "work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute(s) substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution."
3. Details on the methodology for developing the latest Mass. Index budgets are available at www.liveworkthrive.org.

Crittenton Women's Union transforms the course of low-income women's lives so that they can attain economic independence and create better futures for themselves and their families.

WHERE TO GET A COPY OF THE FULL REPORT

The full report, *Hot Jobs 2010: Promoting Economic Independence through Informed Career Decisions*, is available to download on the Crittenton Women's Union Web site, www.liveworkthrive.org.

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