

Top Job Vacancies

a tool for job seekers and workforce professionals

How bad is it out there—and is there a shadow of hope for jobseekers?

That's a tough question for the workforce development world struggling to help laid-off people get back to work or get training for new skills.

The numbers are ugly. In the 2008 Job Outlook, we noted King County vacancies of 33,212. That's more than the *whole state* of Washington has this year.

The only surprise in the data is the surge in Recreation Workers and in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry in general, both of which are second in job vacancies. These jobs in the larger leisure and hospitality sector may be due to the “staycation” trend of the economic downturn.

But despite the general gloom, there may be **bright spots**:

- The Job Vacancy Survey only includes private-sector jobs. Government jobs, such as public utilities (see sidebar, back page) and new infrastructure jobs created by the stimulus, are not indicated here.
- Health care remains strong, with good-paying jobs—both clinical and otherwise—requiring less than a four-year degree. The 2,329 vacancies in the industry include all kinds of jobs, from accounting to IT to marketing, not just nurses and technicians. However, **registered nurses**, a key middle-wage job that requires training beyond high school but less than a four-year degree and provides a livable wage, remain in high demand with 651 openings. Additional occupations in health care – including nursing aides, orderlies, attendants, personal and home care aides – also make the list, illustrating the ongoing workforce needs of this vital industry. A host of opportunities exist to provide skill training in health care careers. Specialized programs range from short-term continuing education courses to certification to associate's and bachelor's degrees. Training programs are offered by a variety of institutions, including community and junior colleges, vocational colleges, universities, private medical employment training agencies, as well as in hospitals and in the military.

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Key Facts

- As of April 2009, King County employers indicated they had **13,868 job vacancies**. That's a 58% decline since our 2008 Job Outlook.
- The whole state has fewer job vacancies this year (32,635) than King County had last year (33,212).
- **Computer software engineers** again represent the highest number of job vacancies.
- **Recreation workers**, not even in the top 25 last year, have the second-highest vacancies.
- **Health care and retail** are again in the top 3 of industry vacancies, but **Arts, Entertainment and Recreation** zoomed up to number 2 from number 14 last year. Few of these jobs are full-time or permanent, yet the average annual wage is much higher than for those in hotels and food service.
- Wages for vacant jobs continue to diverge widely: most are either **under \$15 or over \$30 an hour**.
- **42%** of the state's vacant jobs are in King County.

This report is presented by:



WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF SEATTLE - KING COUNTY





with the Highest Number of Vacancies in Seattle-King County

Washington State Employment Security Department Job Vacancy Survey, March 2009

Occupation	Estimated Job Vacancies	Full-Time Positions	Requiring Education Beyond HS/GED	Requiring License or Certificate	Requiring Previous Experience	Median Hourly Wage*
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	732	100%	97%	7%	100%	\$45.00
Recreation Workers	713	11%	8%	5%	10%	\$12.65
Registered Nurses	651	54%	97%	95%	92%	\$36.92
Waiters and Waitresses	614	18%	14%	99%	38%	\$13.56
Retail Salespersons	456	72%	6%	15%	39%	\$11.54
Marketing Managers	419	100%	100%	8%	100%	\$58.69
Protective Service Workers, All Other	324	2%	0%	100%	4%	\$19.11
Cashiers	263	11%	0%	22%	29%	\$10.46
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	247	99%	100%	15%	100%	\$23.81**
Computer and Information Systems Managers	242	99%	100%	4%	99%	\$62.04
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	185	43%	37%	96%	89%	\$14.01
Cooks, Restaurant	166	45%	3%	98%	93%	\$12.86
Customer Service Representatives	162	80%	11%	9%	65%	\$16.05
Computer Specialists, All Other	155	99%	99%	15%	95%	\$41.07
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	155	68%	0%	0%	66%	\$10.96
Financial Managers	152	98%	86%	33%	97%	\$52.14
Loan Officers	140	98%	40%	13%	100%	\$34.40
Medical and Health Services Managers	140	93%	97%	62%	100%	\$51.54
Management Analysts	136	100%	92%	21%	100%	\$38.69
Accountants and Auditors	135	100%	92%	40%	98%	\$30.50
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	110	18%	0%	0%	13%	\$11.99
Computer Systems Analysts	110	100%	100%	17%	100%	\$40.55
Civil Engineers	108	100%	98%	63%	93%	\$37.42
Personal and Home Care Aides	107	41%	14%	21%	24%	\$11.54
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	104	72%	85%	100%	69%	\$15.68

** Health Educators



Highest to Lowest Number of Vacancies in Seattle-King County

Washington State Employment Security Department Job Vacancy Survey, March 2009

Industry	Estimated Job Vacancies	Full-Time Positions	Requiring Education Beyond HS/GED	Requiring License or Certificate	Requiring Previous Experience	Average Annual Wage [†]
Health care and social assistance	2,329	62.8%	71.4%	73.8%	87.4%	\$46,206
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,813	16.3%	4.0%	73.3%	18.4%	\$37,546
Retail trade	1,745	70.1%	46.1%	15.1%	59.5%	\$35,038
Professional and technical services	1,428	91.6%	79.0%	23.6%	91.5%	\$96,161
Accommodation and food services	1,117	46.5%	13.2%	69.8%	75.2%	\$19,563
Educational services	1,050	85.8%	85.3%	36.8%	91.6%	\$35,140
Information	997	99.6%	67.3%	3.9%	97.5%	\$122,375
Finance and insurance	640	96.3%	51.0%	30.2%	91.8%	\$89,880
Administrative and waste services	618	74.1%	58.0%	61.5%	71.3%	\$41,932
Other services, except public administration	538	81.5%	50.3%	40.8%	78.8%	\$31,773
Wholesale trade	427	92.1%	31.2%	31.5%	66.1%	\$71,036
Manufacturing	371	97.5%	53.7%	14.6%	73.3%	\$71,222
Management of companies and enterprises	284	79.2%	56.4%	27.7%	83.2%	\$94,229
Real estate and rental and leasing	220	79.5%	21.7%	21.9%	83.6%	\$45,176
Construction	174	91.1%	43.4%	41.1%	89.3%	\$57,599
Transportation and warehousing	113	95.5%	19.1%	28.1%	59.7%	\$50,101
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	<25	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	\$76,509
Utilities	<25	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	No data

Data Source for Both Charts: Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market & Economic Analysis branch, April 2009 Job Vacancy Survey.

* Data Source: March 2009 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates. Wage is the median of all hourly wages within the occupation rather than the median wage of job vacancies only, as in previous years.

† Data Source: 2008 King County Average Annual Industry Wages, ESD, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages.

Notes: The Job Vacancy Survey involves thousands of employers across Washington state and is published twice a year. All industries are represented in the survey, except for government. Vacant positions include full- and part-time, temporary and seasonal jobs. The number and types of employers that respond to the survey vary from year to year.

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- Green jobs, specifically those pertaining to efficiency in the built environment, may add new vacancies in 2009-10, depending on investments in retrofitting, weatherization and new construction. The June 2009 *King County Green Building Jobs Employer and Education Survey*, jointly released by the WDC of Seattle-King County and the Washington State Employment Security Department, revealed that green and sustainability knowledge is a growing need across many occupations including building trades, architecture and building management. The impact of stimulus dollars for home weatherization and retrofitting is expected to increase the demand for building trades workers. Similar recovery investments are being made in training the new green workforce to be ready for jobs in renewable energy, Smart Grid, and alternative fuels, to name a few.
- The smaller the firm, it appears from the data, the more likely it is to be hiring. As you can see in the chart, almost 30% of the job vacancies are in firms with fewer than 10 employees. In the last two surveys, this figure was 2%. Data from other recessions have shown that small firms are more likely to return to hiring before larger firms, thus often placing smaller firms in the position of reinvigorating hiring trends. Some theorize that smaller firms tend to be more entrepreneurial and more willing to seize post-recession opportunities and take on risk.

Bright Spot: Public Utilities

Public utilities, such as electricity, natural gas, telephone, water and sewage, are not reflected in the Job Vacancy Survey because they are government jobs. Despite the current economic situation, the industry continues to experience a significant worker shortage, made worse by the increasing loss of skilled labor to retirement. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost half of the nation's utilities workforce will be nearing retirement age within the next 10 years. Local utilities like Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities report this reality is nearer than that, with 50% of workers hitting retirement age within the next five years. Not only will manpower be diminished, but many of the key skills and knowledge within the industry could be lost, having significant impact on the expansion of new infrastructure innovation.

The good news is that the utilities industry shortage means opportunities for those with mechanical, hands-on aptitude and a desire to learn skills related to the installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of materials and systems delivering these services. Individuals at all skill levels can explore these opportunities through various pathways. For example, Seattle City Light has created a pre-apprentice program to help individuals interested in the SCL lineworker apprenticeship program to acquire the required basic skills for success and advancement in this occupation. As with green jobs, federal investments in new technologies like Smart Grid and alternative and renewable energy source transmission mean an increased need for these crucial jobs to be filled.

For more information, see SJI's January 2009 *Job Trends Report: Focus on Public Utilities* at www.seattlejobsinitiative.com.

Firm Size (Number of employees)	Number of Vacancies					
	April '08		October '08		April '09	
<10	674	2.0%	468	2.3%	4,117	29.7%
10-19	1,126	3.7%	985	4.9%	671	4.8%
20-49	4,544	14.8%	2,909	14.5%	494	3.6%
50-99	3,719	12.1%	4,354	21.7%	284	2.0%
100-249	7,442	24.3%	3,988	19.9%	597	4.3%
250 & up	13,115	42.8%	7,380	36.7%	7,705	55.6%
Total	30,621		20,084		13,868	

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department Job Vacancy Survey



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