



SOUTH CAROLINA  
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

# Skills that Work V— Employer View!

FEBRUARY 2009

Personal  
Pathways



to success™

Empowering all students to shape our future.™



# Skills that Work V—Employer View!

## Introduction

Skills that Work V is the fifth edition of a survey of South Carolina employers conducted over the last 10 years. The first four surveys sought to identify barriers to the availability of a quality workforce. Each survey built upon the work of those before it and each showed gaps between skills and competencies being taught in schools and those actually needed in the workplace. Many of the findings were used to garner support for the passage of the groundbreaking education reform legislation we now call Personal Pathways to Success (Education Economic Development Act, EEDA 2005).

The fifth survey is different. In this survey, businesses were asked to define employee “soft” skills, education levels and types of experience required for any open positions in their organization. They also were asked to provide wages and benefits for those same positions and if they would be willing to participate in extended learning opportunities for students. The survey was funded by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce’s Excellence in Education Foundation and conducted by the Labor Market Information Division at the South Carolina Department of Commerce. The information was gathered from May-August 2008 from 339 businesses representing all sectors, size classes and areas of the state.

The results of Skills that Work V can be of great assistance to students, parents and counselors in matching young minds to promising careers. The state’s educational institutions can use the findings to fine tune their curriculum as they seek to better develop student employability skills. In addition, it also provides insightful information to adult workers and workforce agencies on how to increase the value and employability of the state’s existing workforce.

# Skills that Work V—Employer View!

## Executive Summary

- ✓ Employers emphasized the continued need for “soft” skills. This supports the further implementation of training programs geared toward providing personal interaction and responsibility skills.
- ✓ Much has been said and written about the importance of small businesses as job generators. The South Carolina Job Market Survey showed almost 60 percent of South Carolina’s open job positions were with small businesses (those with up to 50 workers). This underscores the significance of small businesses to the state’s job market.
- ✓ Thirty-eight percent of the reported open job positions required more than a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED), vocational training /associate’s degree 15 percent, bachelor’s or advanced degree 23 percent. As the state’s knowledge base economy continues to evolve, this percentage is expected to increase dramatically.
- ✓ Twenty-nine percent of the surveyed businesses said they would be willing to participate in some form of external learning opportunity for students. If the promise of Personal Pathways to Success (EEDA) is to be fully realized, we must find ways to significantly increase this percentage.

# Skills that Work V—Employer View!

## Key Findings

### **BUSINESS SIZE**

- More than 60 percent of all open job positions were in small businesses (with up to 50 workers).
- Small businesses provided 72 percent of full-time open job positions.
- For part-time open job positions, mid-size businesses (51-500 workers) had 56 percent of the positions.

### **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Almost 60 percent of open job positions required a high school diploma or GED, 15 percent required vocational training or an associate's degree, and 23 percent required a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- For full-time open job positions, 57 percent required a high school diploma or GED, 16 percent required vocational training or an associate's degree, and 26 percent required a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- For part-time open job positions, 64 percent required a high school diploma or GED, 27 percent required vocational training or an associate's degree, and 17 percent required a bachelor's or advanced degree.

### **EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

- Two thirds of open job positions required experience related to the position, 24 percent required some work experience, and nine percent required no experience.
- For full-time open job positions, 72 percent required experience related to the position, 21 percent required some work experience, and eight percent required no experience.
- For part-time open job positions, 51 percent required related experience, 34 percent required some experience, and 14 percent required no experience.

### **SALARY/WAGES**

- For full-time open job positions, 39 percent paid between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year, 25 percent paid between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and 24 percent paid between \$30,000 and \$40,000.
- The average salary for full-time open job positions was \$36,028 per year.
- For part-time open job positions, 93 percent paid less than \$10 an hour.
- The average wage for part-time open job positions was \$8.31 an hour.

## **BENEFITS**

- Benefits were offered for all open job positions at the following rates: health insurance 57 percent, retirement savings plans or pensions 50 percent, paid vacation 64 percent and paid sick leave 47 percent.
- For full-time open job positions, the rates were: health insurance 73 percent, retirement savings plans or pensions 63 percent, paid vacation 91 percent and paid sick leave 66 percent.
- For part-time open job positions, the rates were: health insurance 24 percent, retirement savings plans or pensions 21 percent, paid vacation six percent and paid sick leave six percent. More than 57 percent of part-time open job positions had no benefits.

## **REQUIRED “SOFT” SKILLS**

- The “soft” skills most respondents indicated they were looking for in open job positions were teamwork, listening, observation and locating information.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

- The most frequently offered extended learning opportunities were internships, job talks and job shadowing.

# Skills that Work V—Employer View!

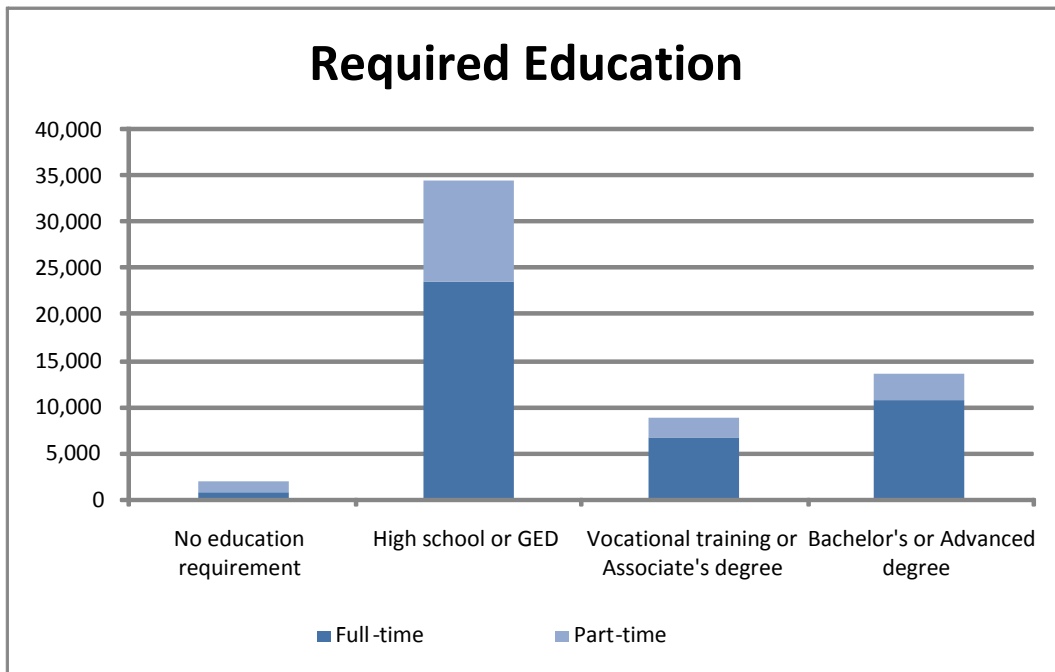
## Summary Data

### **BUSINESS SIZE**

More than 60 percent of all open job positions were in small businesses (with up to 50 workers). Firms with 51-500 employees had 33 percent of the open job positions, while the largest firms (over 500 employees) had four percent. Small businesses provided 72 percent of full-time open job positions, while mid-sized firms had 22 percent, and the largest firms had six percent. For part-time open job positions, mid-size businesses had 56 percent, small businesses had 43 percent, and large businesses had one percent.

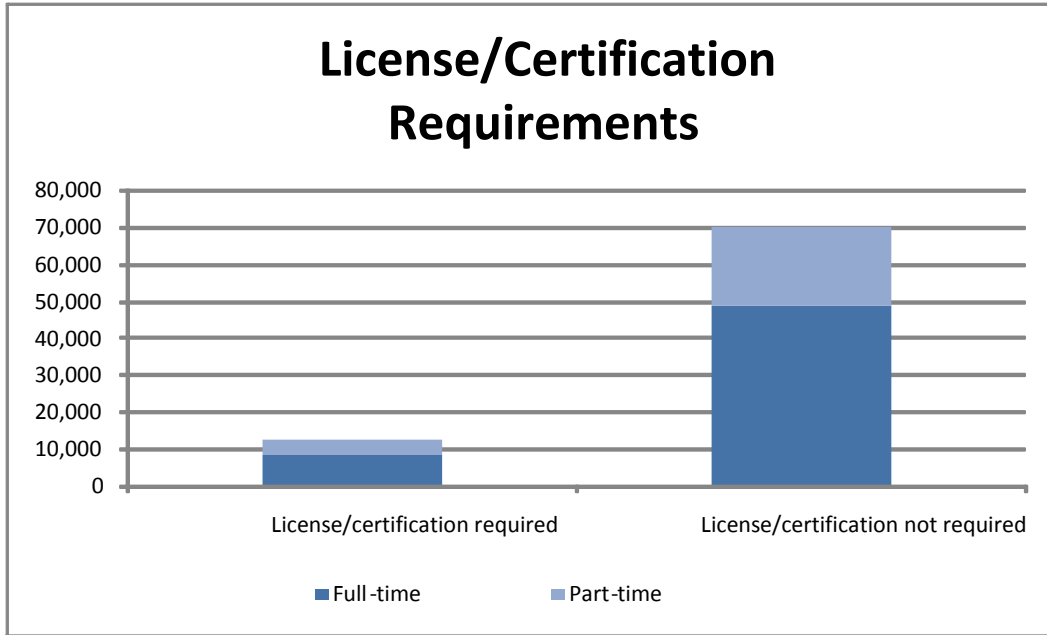
### **REQUIRED EDUCATION**

For open job positions in which businesses provided an education requirement, 59 percent required a high school diploma or GED. Another 13 percent required an advanced degree. For full-time open job positions, 57 percent required a high school diploma or GED, 14 percent required a bachelor's degree, and 12 percent required an advanced degree. For part-time open job positions, 64 percent required a high school diploma or GED, and 17 percent required an advanced degree. Appendix One provides a listing of education requirements by open job position as reported by surveyed employers.



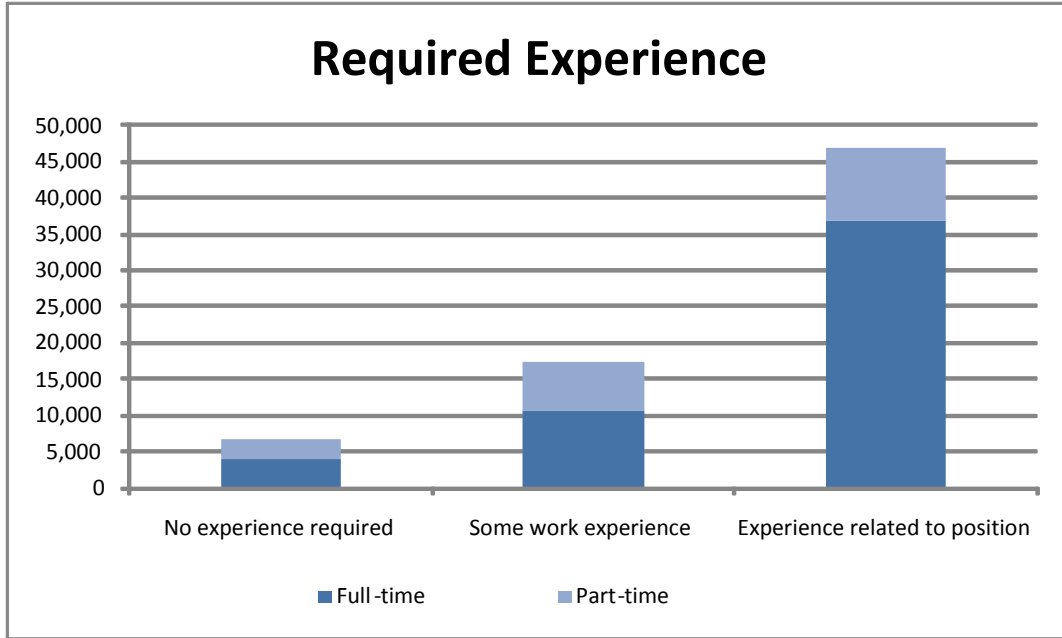
### REQUIREMENT FOR LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION

More than 85 percent of open job positions did not require a license or certification. Eighty-five percent of full-time open job positions and 84 percent of part-time open job positions did not have such a requirement.



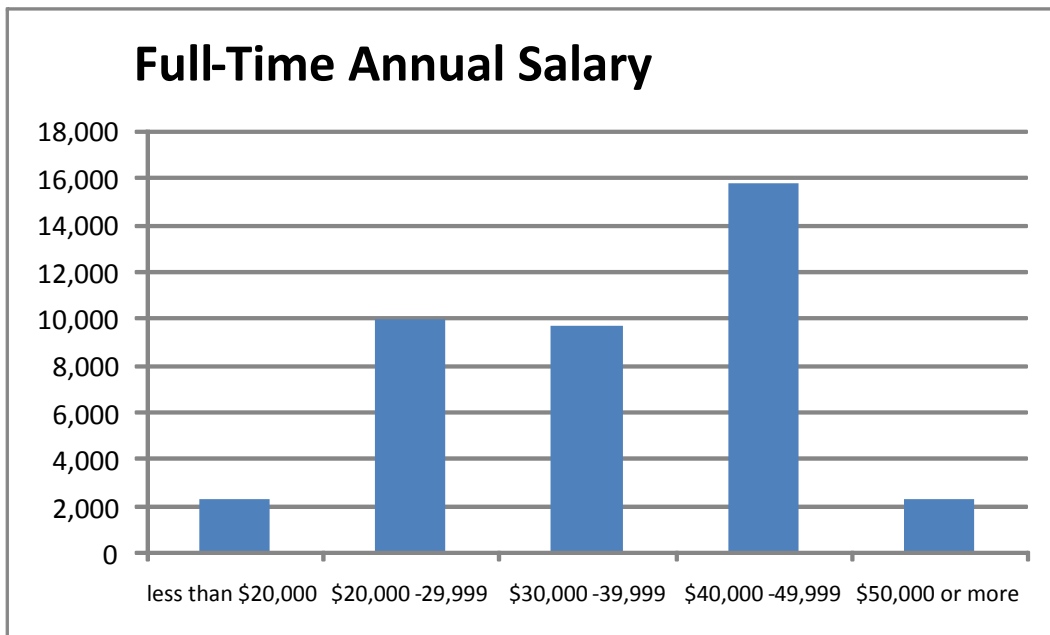
### REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

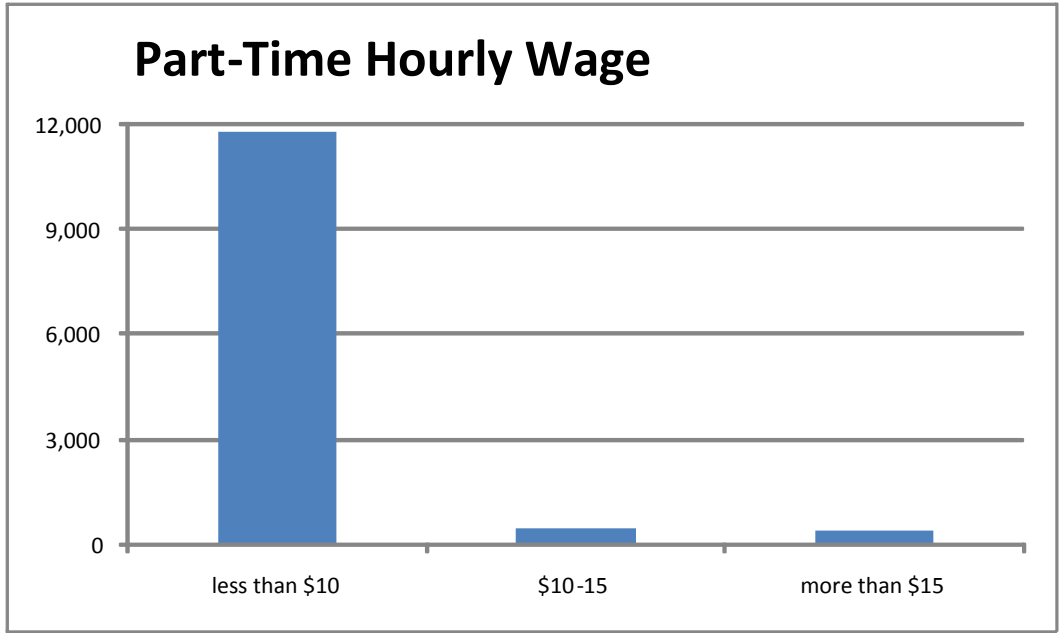
Of open job positions for which an experience requirement was reported, 66 percent required experience related to the position, 24 percent required some work experience, and nine percent required no experience. For full-time open job positions, 72 percent required experience related to the position, 21 percent required some work experience, and eight percent required no experience. For part-time open job positions, 51 percent required related experience, 34 percent required some experience, and 14 percent required no experience.



### SALARY/WAGES

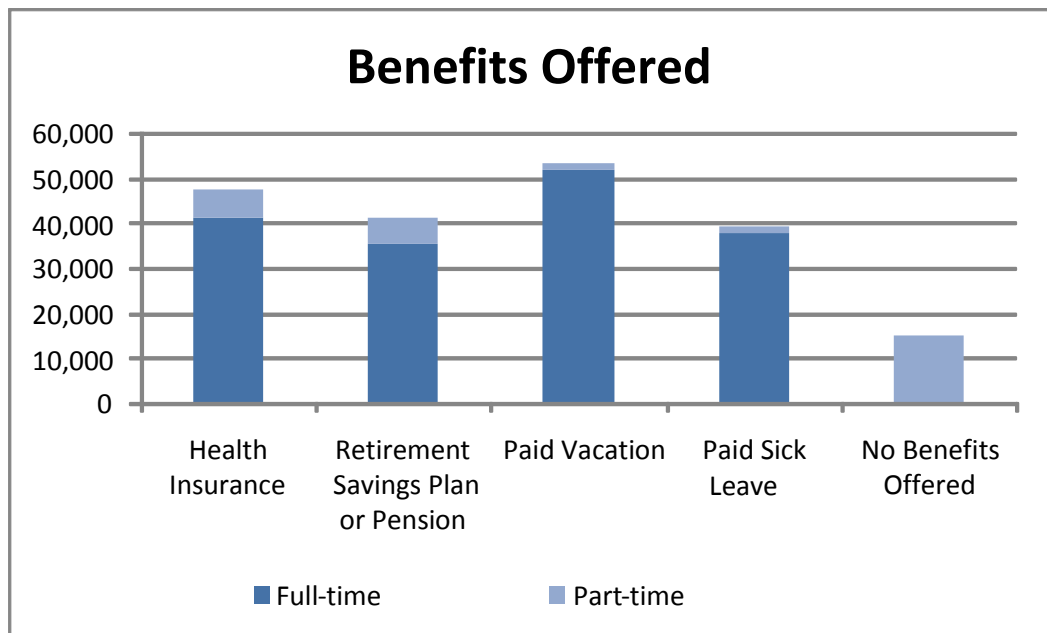
For those full-time open job positions for which a salary was reported, 39 percent paid between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year. Another 25 percent paid between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and 24 percent paid between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The average salary for full-time open job positions was \$36,028 per year. For part-time open job positions with reported wages, 93 percent paid less than \$10 an hour. The average wage for part-time open job positions was \$8.31 an hour.





**BENEFITS OFFERED**

Benefits were offered for all open job positions at the following rates: health insurance 57 percent; retirement savings plans or pensions 50 percent; paid vacation 64 percent; and paid sick leave 47 percent. For full-time open job positions, the rates were as follows: health insurance 73 percent; retirement savings plans or pensions 63 percent; paid vacation 91 percent; and paid sick leave 66 percent. For part-time open job positions, the rates were: health insurance 24 percent; retirement savings plans or pensions 21 percent; paid vacation six percent; and paid sick leave six percent.

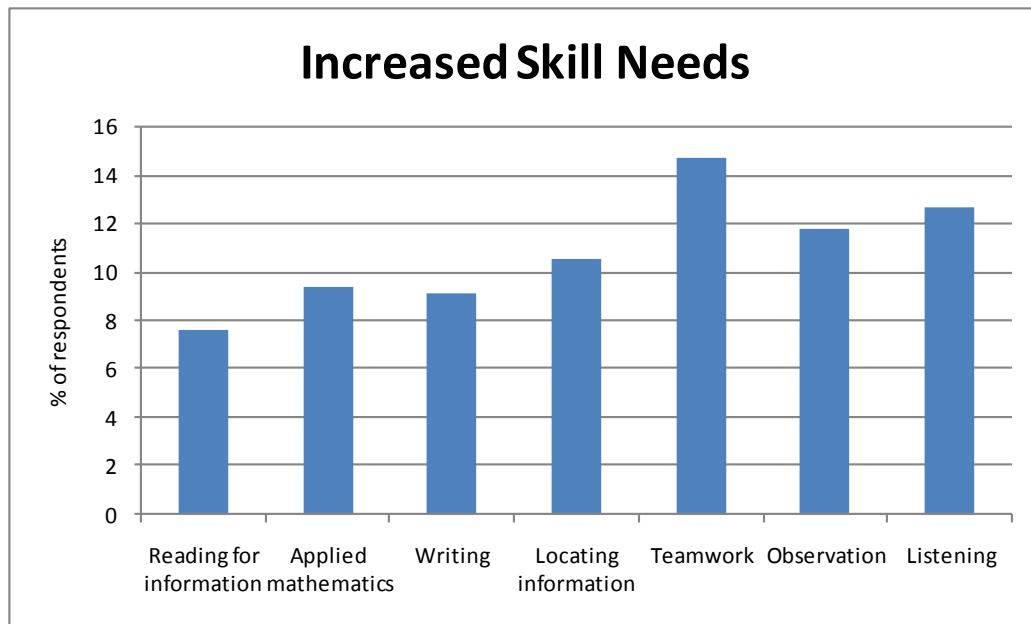


### “SOFT” SKILLS NEEDED

Surveyed businesses were asked if they anticipated open job positions needing more or less of the following skills over the next year:

- Reading for Information
- Applied Mathematics
- Writing
- Locating Information
- Teamwork
- Observation
- Listening

The respondents indicated their workers would need more teamwork (15 percent of respondents). The next most cited skill was listening (13 percent), followed by observation (12 percent) and locating information (11 percent). Few respondents indicated their workers would need less of any of the skills.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Twenty-nine percent of respondents said they would be willing to provide one or more of the following external learning opportunities for students:

- Job Shadowing
- Internships
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Job Talks at Schools
- Video Tours of Their Business
- Brochures for Counselors about the Business
- On-site Tours
- College Co-ops
- Career Fairs

The most frequently offered extended learning opportunities were: internships (18 percent), job talks (16 percent) and job shadowing (15 percent).

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## Appendix One

### **Employer Educational Requirements For Open Job Positions As Reported in Survey**

#### **High School or GED**

Baggage Porters and Bellhops  
Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks  
Carpenter Helpers  
Cashiers  
Coin, Vending and Amusement Machine Servicers  
Correctional Officers and Jailers  
Couriers and Messengers  
Customer Service Representatives  
Helpers--Production Workers  
Janitors and Cleaners  
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers  
Locker Room, Coatroom and Dressing Room Attendants  
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners  
Maintenance and Repair Helpers  
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians  
Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants  
Office Clerks, General  
Packers and Packagers, Hand  
Parking Lot Attendants  
Police, Fire and Ambulance Dispatchers  
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers  
Tellers  
Receptionists  
Recreation Workers  
Retail Salespersons  
Sales Representatives (except Manufacturing, Technical, Medical and Scientific Products)  
Security Guards  
Social and Human Service Assistants  
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers

#### **Vocational Training**

Carpenters  
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders  
Electricians  
Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators and Tenders  
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses  
Machinists and Millwrights

Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians  
Milling and Planning Machine Setters, Operators and Tenders  
Physical Therapists  
Production, Planning and Expediting Clerks  
Social and Human Service Assistants  
Tool and Die Makers  
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer  
Welder

**Associate's Degree**

Administrative Services Managers  
Assistant Chefs  
Bakers  
Database Administrators  
Electrical and Electronics Drafters  
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
First-Line Supervisors/Managers  
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses  
Occupational Therapist Assistants  
Property, Real Estate and Community Association Managers  
Registered Nurses  
Respiratory Therapists  
Surgical Technologists

**Bachelor's Degree**

Accountants and Auditors  
Architects  
Appraisers and Assessors of Real Estate  
Chefs and Head Cooks  
Computer and Information Systems Analysts  
Computer Support Specialists  
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics  
Engineers and Scientists  
Management Analysts  
Managers  
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists  
Medical and Health Services Directors  
Medical and Public Health Social Workers  
Meeting and Convention Planners  
Network and Computer Systems Administrators  
Occupational Therapists  
Physical Therapists  
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers  
Producers and Directors  
Public Relations Specialists  
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products

School Teachers  
Social and Human Service Assistants  
Social Science Research Assistants  
Surveying and Mapping Technicians  
Registered Nurses  
Respiratory Therapists  
Urban and Regional Planners

**Advanced Degree**

Chemists  
Child, Family and School Social Workers  
Education Administrators, Postsecondary  
Educational, Vocational and School Counselors  
Lawyers  
Medical Doctors  
Nursing Instructors  
Pharmacists  
Teachers, Special and Vocational Education