

# Jobs report says education key

Ohio positions requiring higher skill level to increase

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More jobs in Ohio will require a postsecondary education in the next six years while workers who only finish high school or drop out will face languishing employment opportunities, according to a recent report.

By 2018, about 57 percent of all jobs in the state will require some

training beyond high school, according to a report released in September by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. The number of jobs available to high school graduates and dropouts in the state will grow, but only slightly.

"The positions that most of the employers are looking to fill these days require more than a high

school diploma," said Steve Offord, Job Bank supervisor with the Ohio Job & Family Services department.

In the next six years, jobs in the state requiring a postsecondary education and training will increase to about 3.34 million — up 153,000 from 2008 — according to the Georgetown report.

During the same time, jobs requiring workers to have a high school degree or no degree will grow by only 30,000 jobs to 2.56

million positions.

The report estimates that the state will have about 1.7 million job openings by 2018 because of newly created positions and vacancies resulting from retirements.

Of the openings, about 967,000 will require postsecondary credentials, 600,000 will require high school diplomas and 142,000 will require no diplomas.

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# Work force

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Postsecondary education and training is increasingly important because the economy is making the transition to sectors in which education, health care and business services have the strongest job growth, said Nicole Smith, senior economist with the Georgetown center and co-author of the report.

Manufacturing is expected to decline by about 17.7 percent in Ohio by 2018, while private education services and health-care industries will account for more than one out of every three new jobs in the state, the report said.

Meanwhile, jobs in professional and business services will account for more than one out of every four new positions created.

The new economy will put new demands on workers.

In the past, workers in manufacturing positions typically received on-the-job training and developed skills through their employers, Smith said.

But employers these days expect more of their hires, and want them to be prepared for work responsibilities before they join the payroll, she said. Degrees and credentials are

important during the job hunt because they articulate the skills that job-seekers possess.

"It's an employers' market now, and employers have the opportunity to be very picky and selective about the candidates they choose," Smith said. "Employers are not interested in training you as they ought to be, and they want you to hit the road running."

Rapidly changing technology also is raising expectations, because even entry-level positions typically require workers to have a basic knowledge of computers and software.

Ohio occupations with the most promising outlooks based on job growth and earnings almost all require degrees, said Jane Dockery, associate director of the Center for Urban and Public Affairs at Wright State University in Dayton.

"There are only five occupations in the top 50 [in Ohio] where you don't need to have a degree," she said.

Unlike many occupations, the national labor demand for health-care practitioners and technical occupations and also computer and math sciences workers exceeds the amount of available job-seekers.

The number of advertised vacancies in December exceed the number of job-seekers in these occupations by a ratio of

almost 3 to 1, according to the Conference Board.

In contrast, there were 16.7 unemployed workers in the construction sector for every vacancy advertised in November.

Offord said job seekers do not need advanced degrees in specialized fields to look attractive to employers, but they should have some skills relevant to the positions they are pursuing. That usually includes a rudimentary understanding of computers.

"Employers are willing to train, but they will only train in those things specific to their company," he said. "They want you to come in with all the other general stuff."

During a visit to the Miami Valley Career Technology Center on Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan extolled the school's programs for preparing students for the ever-changing demands of the modern workplace.

"In these really tough economic times, there is a mismatch between what employers are looking for and the skills we are providing," Duncan said. "All of us in education need to look in the mirror and say, 'We're not doing good enough.'"