



David DeLong, DBA

WHERE THE JOBS ARE

The Government Is Hiring 193,000 People...Plus Other "Hot" Sectors

Despite the grim news about unemployment and layoffs, there still are jobs to be found in today's economy. *Employers have positions to fill immediately, even for older workers...*

HOTTEST SECTORS

■ **Federal government.** In 2010, almost 60% of all federal government supervisors and nearly half of all nonsupervisory workers will be eligible to retire. That's because the huge baby boomer population is beginning to reach retirement age. While concerns about health-care costs and the economy may keep many from leaving, a significant number will retire. So federal agencies are hiring now, and not only in the nation's capital. Five out of six federal employees work outside Washington, DC, with the next largest concentrations of federal jobs in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Salt Lake City and San Diego.

The federal government is expected to hire 193,000 new employees in the next two years—and in most cases, age is no barrier. The government is looking for human resources managers, office clerks, accountants, information technology security workers, engineers, scientists and policy analysts, among other types of positions. The Veterans Health Administration needs human resources specialists. People under the age of 31 can apply for

jobs as air-traffic controllers for the Federal Aviation Administration, where thousands of controllers are about to retire.

All federal jobs now are listed on one Web site, www.usajobs.gov.

■ **Health care.** Next to government work, the best job security is in health care, an expanding industry as the baby boomer population ages. If you can afford to invest some time in training, consider studying for a certificate to work as a medical records specialist or a pharmacy technician. Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees in these fields—online courses can be completed in a few months and cost less than \$1,500.

Hospitals and nursing homes need many people to fill a variety of positions. As of the beginning of February, the Methodist Hospital in Houston (www.methodisthealth.com) had 400 openings, including positions for information systems and human resources professionals, cleaning people and clerical workers. The Mayo Clinic (www.mayo.clinic.org) recently had more than 1,000 openings for nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists. Scripps Health in San Diego (www.scripps.org), which AARP identified in 2008 as being one of the "Best Employers for Workers over 50," recently was looking for hundreds of employees, including many with business backgrounds. Rural hospitals tend to be especially shorthanded.

■ **Education.** Schools will need 2.8 million new teachers in the next eight years, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Like federal government workers, today's older teachers who have spent their careers within school systems have good pensions that will allow them to retire. Although budget cuts mean many local school districts won't be able to replace every retiree and some have instituted hiring freezes, they can wait only so long. Eventually, there will be a huge push to find good teachers, particularly in math and science. The experience of older teachers could be a real asset, especially in areas with the greatest demand. There also should be a need for principals, school administrators, education consultants and tutors. If you have technical skills or experience in a trade, look into openings for teachers at vocational schools and community colleges.

GROWING DEMAND

Other potential employers include security service providers, accounting firms, grocery chains and companies that benefit from investments in roads and bridges funded by the economic stimulus package just passed by Congress.

■ **Security.** Hard times lead to crime. The stimulus package includes money for 100,000 police officers over the next eight years. Even cash-strapped local governments are hiring today to fill positions related to public safety.

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In the private economy, security services for computer systems are expanding and private security guards are in demand.

Besides filling slots vacated by retirees, the federal government has 83,000 new jobs in defense and homeland security services to fill. The Transportation Security Administration needs another 22,000 airport screeners who can be trained quickly.

■ **Accounting.** While Wall Street jobs now are scarce, people with a background in finance still can find work. Many regional and community banks, for instance, are doing just fine. And major accounting firms, such as KPMG (www.us.kpmg.com), PriceWaterhouseCoopers (www.pwc.com) and Ernst & Young (www.ey.com), will continue to aggressively hire accountants and administrators and will be looking for a mix of recent graduates and experienced workers. Ernst & Young expects to hire 2,400 professionals in the coming year. Consulting firms, such as Booz Allen (www.boozallen.com) and Accenture (www.accenture.com), are hiring thousands of people with information technology skills in specialties such as Java and SAP. There will be more demand for personal financial planners—new baby boomer retirees

will need help managing investments and planning for old age.

■ **Grocery chains.** People are buying food to cook at home—and grocery chains need cashiers, retail clerks, managers and other professionals for back-office functions. Wegmans Food Markets (www.wegmans.com), a 72-store chain, recently had 2,000 openings in its stores. Publix Super Markets (www.publix.com) in Florida has had more than 900 openings, and Whole Foods Market (www.wholefoodsmarket.com) reported more than 800 job openings across the country.

■ **Going green.** An explosion in green jobs seems on its way, although the credit freeze is slowing things down. If you don't need a job to pay the mortgage next month, consider specialized training to help companies respond to new environmental-safety laws and demands for green products. See www.greenbiz.com for information about educational resources on sustainable business practices.

■ **Infrastructure.** The \$787 billion stimulus plan includes money for roads, bridges and other transportation projects, as well as for energy and education projects. It should create openings at construction and engineering firms, as well as at companies

with new energy projects, including utilities. Follow your local news to learn how your region will benefit.

HIRING DURING LAYOFFS

Don't write a company off your list just because it's laying off some workers. Companies can be actively hiring even while downsizing. Microsoft, for example, recently announced that it was letting 5,000 employees go, but it will continue to hire thousands of people for positions in marketing and software design. Big corporations require many kinds of specialized skills and operate in many locations—a freeze in one department may not prevent another from staffing up.

WHERE THE JOBS AREN'T

Every field presents opportunities if your skills, personality and passion give you a competitive advantage in that area. *Still, there are some job categories where the odds definitely are stacked against you today...*

- **Automotive parts assemblers**
- **Stockbrokers**
- **Home builders**
- **Real estate agents**
- **Manufacturing jobs**
- **Journalists.** ■ ■