

Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Skillshed Analysis



Executive Summary

*A study of occupational clusters, skills, & gap analysis
in the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Region*

Released June 2011

Introduction

A Skillshed is the geographic area from which a region pulls its workforce and the skills, education, and experience that the workforce possesses. Traditionally, labor markets have been studied in terms of the products produced by a region to understand what industries are relatively strong. A Skillshed helps to understand not only where the region's competitive strengths currently lie by detailing the current workforce mix, but also in which occupations or industries the region could grow into by understanding the difference between the current skill set and that skill set needed by emerging markets. The outcome of the Skillshed helps to analyze four key findings:

- Identification of the current skills possessed by the supply of workers.
- Projected employment growth, and median wages, skills, and knowledge needed by employers.
- The demand for workers considering the factors affecting supply and demand
- Gap analysis between the current set of skills and education and that set needed by current and prospective employers.

The Skillshed analysis integrated and analyzed information from three different sources; the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Laborshed Study, the Regional Workforce Needs Assessment (Job Vacancy) Survey, and information from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET). These three sources were used to present the supply and demand for labor within the region and the examples of gap analysis from current to emerging or high growth occupations.

The Laborshed survey was conducted and analyzed using 2,302 telephone survey responses from a random sample of 18-64 year olds within the region. Respondents were asked a wide range of demographic and employment-related questions. Areas of interest from the Laborshed survey:

- Work experience within the region
- Population by occupational category
- Unemployment and commuting patterns

The second annual Workforce Needs Assessment was conducted from September 2008 through January 2009. There were 568 employer responses from the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Region, yielding an 28.0 percent response rate. In addition to vacancy and retirement data, this year's survey included questions pertaining to average hourly starting wage. Analysis of the survey illustrates the demand for workers and skills required in the vacant positions. Areas analyzed using the Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment were:

- Vacancies by occupation
- Vacancies across industries
- Work activities, skills, and knowledge areas most needed by employers
- Starting wages offered and experience required

The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) is a joint effort between the US Department of Labor and the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. It provides a database of standardized and occupation-specific descriptions that help determine which factors are critical in the performance of an occupation. Data used for these analyses were:

- Work activities
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Job Description

Supply of Workers

Through use of the Laborshed study, the current occupations and skills of the region were identified. **Table 1** (below) shows the top occupational experience reported in the region by percentage of total and compares the regional Laborshed percent of occupations to that of the state. This comparison helps to identify those categories of occupations in which the region may have a higher concentration of workers and, therefore, may have a competitive advantage.

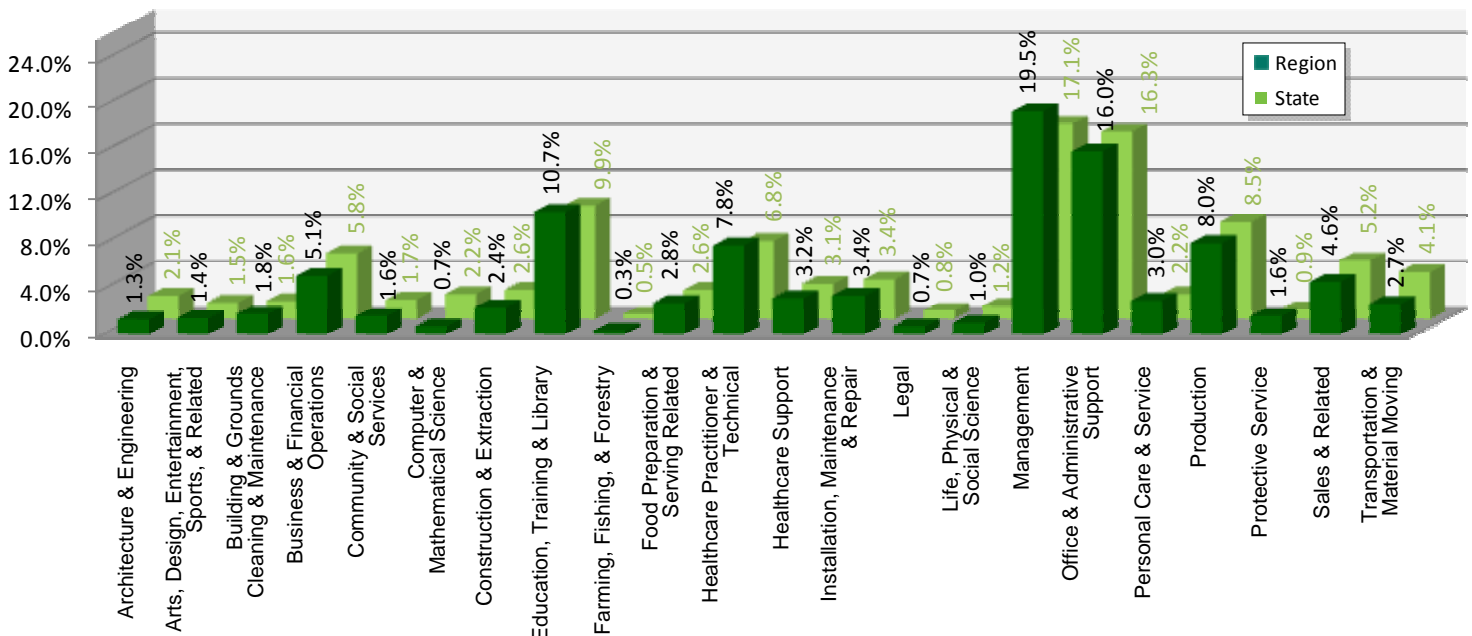
The table also includes the statewide projected annual growth rate in employment¹. The average projected growth rate for all jobs in the state is .98 percent. The top five occupations held in the region are: Teachers & Instructors (6.28%); Chief Executives (5.78%); Managers, All Other (5.62%); Registered Nurses (4.00%); and Farmers & Ranchers (3.56%).

Table 1
Occupational Experience in Region

Occupation	Percent of Region ²	Percent of State ³	Statewide Projected Annual Growth Rate ¹
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	6.28%	5.70%	1.37%
Chief Executives	5.78%	4.30%	-0.10%
Managers, All Other	5.62%	4.10%	0.76%
Registered Nurses	4.00%	3.20%	2.20%
Farmers and Ranchers	3.56%	1.90%	-0.24%
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	3.06%	3.10%	1.22%
Production Workers, All Other	2.45%	2.50%	0.57%
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2.28%	2.60%	1.24%
Accountants and Auditors	1.67%	1.20%	2.26%
Child Care Workers	1.67%	1.10%	1.07%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1.67%	1.20%	1.07%
Postsecondary Teachers, All Other	1.56%	1.40%	1.45%
Teacher Assistants	1.56%	1.90%	0.94%
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1.45%	1.30%	0.17%
Customer Service Representatives	1.22%	1.70%	2.40%

The occupations listed above can also be analyzed by overall occupational category. **Chart 1** presents the occupational categories for the region. The region has a high relative concentration of workers in the Management; Office & Administrative Support; and Education, Training, & Library occupational categories which is similar to that of the state with Office & Administrative Support (16.3%), Management (17.1%), and Production (9.9%).

Chart 1
Population by Occupational Category



¹ <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/pubs/statewide/stateoccproj.pdf>

² Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Laborshed Survey (2010)

³ Iowa Laborshed Survey (2010)

Commuting and Willingness to Change/Accept Employment

The Laborshed Study also presents data on the commuting patterns and the willingness to change and/or accept employment. On average, workers within the region currently commute 8 miles each way to work for a median wage of \$14.00 per hour and would be willing to commute up to 12 miles for a desired median wage of \$13.00 per hour.

Almost one-fourth (23.0%) of the employed are willing to change employment and over three-fifths (70.0%) of those reporting to be unemployed are willing/able to accept employment within the region. Commuting ranges and the willingness to change and/or accept employment could have an impact on economic development as the region covers a relatively large area and the majority are rural communities.

Demand for Workers

The Workforce Needs Assessment reveals the vacant jobs employers reported in the region. **Table 2** shows the occupations with the most reported vacancies, the average starting wage, statewide median wage, and the statewide starting wage. The relationship between the regional starting wage and statewide wages can help us analyze the demand for workers within an occupation. For the most part, starting wages for jobs within the region are between the statewide starting wage and the statewide median wage. Regional starting wages greater than the statewide median wage may indicate an occupation highly in-demand. These workers are so highly needed that a significantly higher wage is still not enough to satisfy employer demand.

Demand for workers also helps to show the current demand for skills and education within the region. By using the occupations as a proxy for skills and education need, the current vacancies can be translated to needed skill sets. These needed skill sets can then be analyzed with projected growth in occupations and wages. When analyzing employer needs and economic growth within a region, it is important to see which jobs are in high-demand currently, which jobs are projected to grow in the future, and whether any overlap occurs between currently demanded occupations and those with high projected growth rates.

Table 2
Occupations with Most Vacancies

Job Title	Regional Starting Wage ¹	Statewide Median Wage ²	Statewide Entry Level Wage ²
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	\$ 9.00	\$ 9.65	\$ 8.18
Personal and Home Care Aides	\$ 8.88	\$ 9.60	\$ 8.72
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	\$ 10.14	\$ 11.44	\$ 9.78
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$ 10.32	\$ 18.15	\$ 13.35
Coaches and Scouts	\$ 11.74	\$ 9.03	\$ 7.86
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	\$ 13.58	\$ 17.85	\$ 11.89
Cashiers	\$ 7.25	\$ 8.44	\$ 7.77
Machinists	\$ 7.00	\$ 16.87	\$ 12.55
Registered Nurses	\$ 22.77	\$ 24.44	\$ 19.18
Production Workers, All Other	\$ 11.89	\$ 13.42	\$ 9.37
Managers, All Other	\$ 16.83	\$ 34.48	\$ 19.19
Sales and Related Workers, All Other	\$ 17.44	\$ 16.70	\$ 10.98
Customer Service Representatives	\$ 9.63	\$ 13.58	\$ 9.55

Table 3 (next page) shows the largest industries in the region (by employment), and the vacancies most reported by those industries. The wholesale and retail trade industries have been combined due to the similarity in occupational mix.

In some instances, employers may have difficulty filling a vacancy in one industry but can fill the same occupation in another industry quite easily. Aside from differences in starting wages, these cases can occur because work duties and educational requirements may be similar across industries, but the work environment may be different and applicants may need some industry specific knowledge. Other occupations may be equally difficult to fill across industries. By examining the occupations demanded across industries, we can begin to see a demand picture for occupational categories.

¹ Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Workforce Needs Assessment (2011)

² <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/occupations/wages/index.htm>

Employers in the region reported requiring less experience and fewer years of formal education for their vacancies than those levels generally reported on O*NET or other occupational planning sources. This indicates that employers are willing to work with applicants to develop the skills and knowledge for the job rather than demanding that an applicant possess all skills at the outset.

**Table 3
Top Jobs Within Region's Largest Industries**

Industry	Occupation	Average Education Requirement	Average Experience Requirement	Average Starting Wage ³
Education	Coaches and Scouts	*	1-2 years	\$11.74
	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Bachelor's Degree	1-2 years	\$14.50
	Speech-Language Pathologists	Master's Degree	More than 5 years	*
Health Care & Social Services	Personal and Home Care Aides	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	\$8.88
	Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	Associate Degree	No Experience Needed	\$10.14
	Executive Secretaries and Administrative	Associate Degree	1-2 years	\$8.85
	Registered Nurses	Technical Training/Certification	3-5 years	\$22.77
Manufacturing	Machinists	Technical Training/Certification	1-2 years	*
	Production Workers, All Other	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	\$10.31
	Welding, Soldering, & Brazing Machine	Technical Training/Certification	1-2 years	*
	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	High School Diploma/GED	Less than 1 year	*
Wholesale & Retail Trade	Cashiers	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	\$7.25
	Retail Salespersons	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	\$8.07
	Customer Service Representatives	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	\$7.25
Public Administration	Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service Workers	High School Diploma/GED	No Experience Needed	*
	Correctional Officers and Jailers	Associate Degree	1-2 years	*
	Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	Technical Training/Certification	1-2 years	*

³Insufficient Survey Data

Table 4 and **Table 5** show the top work activities, the top skills, and the top knowledge required by employers to fill current positions and those critical to the three occupational clusters of Healthcare; Agricultural Business & Food Technology; and Education, Training, & Library. Overwhelmingly, employers reported their need for workers that could interact and communicate with others inside and outside the organization.

**Table 4
Work Activities by Employer Needs**

Work Activities
Assisting and Caring for Others
Communicating with persons inside organization
Documenting and Recording Information
Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships
Getting Information
Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events
Making Decisions and Problem Solving
Monitoring Processes, Materials, and Surroundings
Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work
Updating and Using relevant Knowledge

**Table 5
Knowledge by Employer Needs**

Knowledge
Biology
Customer Service
Education and Training
English Language
Mathematics
Medicine & Dentistry
Psychology
Therapy & Counseling

³Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Workforce Needs Assessment (2011)

Table 6 presents a sample of high growth occupations, their projected annual growth rates, and median wages for the region. These data (projected employment 2008-2018) represent the occupations that are most likely to experience growth throughout the region based on current employment. Industry projections for the state, from the Iowa Workforce Information Network, for the same time period show growth by percent employment change in internet service providers (50.7%); other information services (44.1%); professional, scientific, and technical services (32.6%); and ambulatory health care services (30.0%)².

**Table 6
Regional High Growth Occupations**

Occupation	Projected Annual Growth Rate ¹	Statewide Median Wage ¹
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	5.4%	\$ 31.75
Financial Examiners	4.4%	\$ 32.65
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	4.3%	\$ 32.27
Home Health Aides	4.3%	\$ 10.50
Personal and Home Care Aides	4.0%	\$ 9.60
Personal Financial Advisors	3.8%	\$ 25.08
Physician Assistants	3.5%	\$ 39.50
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	3.4%	\$ 19.46
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	3.4%	\$ 35.03
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	3.2%	\$ 13.89
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	3.1%	\$ 37.02
Dental Hygienists	3.1%	\$ 31.00
Dental Assistants	3.1%	\$ 16.11
Compliance Officers, Except Agriculture, Construction, Health and Safety	3.1%	\$ 23.08

Jobs with a negative annual projected employment growth should be studied to see which skills or training would be necessary to move workers into the occupations that show more future job growth.

Table 7 shows a sample of occupations with negative or low growth, their projected annual growth rates (projected employment 2008-2018) throughout the region based on current employment, and median wages for the region. Industry projections for the same time period statewide, show a negative growth by percent employment change in textile product mills (-35.1%); apparel manufacturing (-28.9%); leather and allied product manufacturing (-19.4%); and support activities for mining (-14.3%). More information for industry projections can be found at <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/pubs/statewide/indprojstatewide.pdf>.

**Table 7
Regional Declining and Low Growth Occupations**

Occupation	Projected Annual Growth Rate ¹	Statewide Median Wage ¹
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, & Processing Machine Operators	-3.0%	\$ 24.97
Order Clerks	-2.5%	\$ 14.47
File Clerks	-2.3%	\$ 9.58
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	-1.4%	\$ 14.11
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers, All Other	-1.3%	\$ 15.93
Conveyor Operators and Tenders	-1.2%	\$ 12.90
Gaming Change Persons and Booth Cashiers	-1.2%	\$ 11.34
Information and Record Clerks, All Other	-1.1%	\$ 16.36
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	-1.1%	\$ 11.51
Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	-1.0%	\$ 15.87
Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	-0.9%	\$ 11.46
Telemarketers	-0.8%	\$ 10.34
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	-0.8%	\$ 16.54
Chemical Plant and System Operators	-0.8%	\$ 21.59

¹ <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/pubs/statewide/stateoccproj.pdf>

² <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/pubs/statewide/indprojstatewide.pdf>

Factors Affecting Supply & Demand

Starting wages that are below the required wage a worker would need to consider employment could present a problem for employers trying to fill a vacant position. Aside from increasing starting wages, possible solutions are those that decrease the cost of transportation for employees, increasing benefits, flexible hours, or providing training opportunities for employed people with income constraints.

Employee turnover has an affect on the job market in the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Region just as it does everywhere else. The Workforce Needs Survey showed high levels of vacancies for jobs in the food preparation & serving, sales & related, and the personal care & services occupational categories. High turnover in these occupations does not necessarily indicate high demand for employees. There is little economic developers can do to decrease turnover within occupational categories or the job market as a whole.

Mismatch in skills between workers and job vacancies can be identified by examining individuals that are employed in positions that do not maximize their previous experience, skills and education, or that do not adequately compensate them based on their qualifications.

Worker/Employer connection is another factor affecting the relationship between the supply of workers in the region and the demand for those workers. The most likely cause of this imbalance in the labor market is a lack of information shared between people that have necessary skills to those seeking employees. Counseling services, consolidated region-wide job banks, and other services promoting the dissemination of information are those most likely to assist with closing this gap.

The media most used by job seekers in the region, as reported by the Laborshed Analysis, are: the internet (64.1%), local/regional newspapers (57.2%), local Iowa Workforce Development Centers (26.9%), and networking (19.4%). The most visited internet sites for worker job search are: www.monster.com, www.iowaworkforce.org, and www.google.com. The top four media used by employers to find applicants, as reported by the Workforce Needs Assessment Survey, are local/regional newspapers (86.3%), local Iowa Workforce Development Centers (61.0%), the internet (60.1%), and college/university career centers (44.8%). The most used internet sites for employers are: company specific websites, www.iowaworkforce.org, www.masoncityglobegazette.com, and www.monster.com.

Gap Analysis

Three occupational clusters have been selected for gap analysis based on strength of the workforce and targeted industries identified by the Laborshed and Workforce Needs Assessment. The clusters are Agricultural Business & Food Technology; Education, Training, & Library; and Healthcare. They were selected for their projected employment growth, high average wages, and the proximity between required skills for the occupations and the current skill set of the workforce. For these reasons, the workforce will be able to transfer into these occupations easily and with the most value added to the regional economy. **Tables 8-10** provide examples of the occupations within the workforce that are most related to the emerging occupations. The tables also include those skills shared by the occupations and those in which more training will be needed to transition from the occupation currently in great supply within the regional workforce to an emerging occupation.

Within the Healthcare cluster of occupations, the regional workforce fell short with respect to education in Medicine & Dentistry, Education & Training, and Psychology. On average, the occupations within the cluster demand an associate degree level of understanding in the core areas. With respect to experience, the current workforce requires training in Assisting & Caring for Others, Getting Information, and Making Decisions & Solving Problems.

It is important to note the difference between the results of the gap analysis for the population on average and that displayed in the figures. The following tables display the shared and additional skills or education needed to transition a worker from a related occupation into one of the emerging occupations. The gap analysis for the population on average showed that there were certain areas of skills and education that were needed to transition a group of the population into the group of emerging occupations. For example, Table 8 shows that a medical secretary will need training and education in medicine & dentistry; psychology; assisting & caring for others; and identifying objects, actions, and events. The portion of the population that was well suited for careers in the Healthcare group; however, needs training and education in assisting & caring for others; customer service; documenting & recording information; getting information; medicine & dentistry; psychology; therapy & counseling; and updating & using relevant knowledge. Further analysis of the skills differences between specific occupations is available through the O*NET system. The analysis of the overall skills and educational differences between the population and the groups of emerging occupations is provided in this report and in the Skillshed Technical Report.

From the table on the following page, we also see that some of the most common skills needed to transition the workforce are: Medicine & Dentistry; Psychology; Assisting & Caring for Others; and Making Decisions & Problem Solving.

**Table 8
Related Occupations to Healthcare**

Related Occupations		Median Wages	Overlapping Skills and Education	Required Areas for Improvement	
Healthcare	Emerging Occupation: Physician Assistants	\$ 39.50			
	Career Pathways	Medical Assistants	\$ 13.93	Customer and Personal Service; Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events	Medicine and Dentistry; Psychology; Getting Information; Making Decisions and Solving Problems
		Physical Therapist Assistants	\$ 18.83	Customer and Personal Service; Assisting and Caring for Others	Medicine and Dentistry; Biology; Getting Information; Making Decisions and Solving Problems
		Medical Secretaries	\$ 13.61	Customer and Personal Service; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	Medicine and Dentistry; Psychology; Assisting and Caring for Others; Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events
	Emerging Occupation: Occupational Therapists	\$ 30.13			
	Career Pathways	Recreational Therapists	\$ 17.07	Psychology; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	Education and Training; Medicine and Dentistry; Making Decisions and Solving Problems; Monitor Processes, Materials, or Surroundings
		Compensation, Benefits, & Job Analysis Specialists	\$ 22.07	Customer and Personal Service; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work	Psychology; Therapy and Counseling; Assisting and Caring for Others; Thinking Creatively
Vocational Education Teachers		\$ 20.07	Education and Training; Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge	Psychology; Therapy and Counseling; Assisting and Caring for Others; Making Decisions and Solving Problems	

*Skills data available through O*Net (www.onetcenter.org)*

The Agricultural Business & Food Technology occupational cluster was the most closely related to the set of skills and experiences held by the regional workforce. The most critical gap in education required fell within biology, chemistry, and mathematics. The gap between the current knowledge of these subjects within the regional workforce and the level of knowledge required was between the associate's and bachelor's degree level, or less than one year of coursework.

From the table below, we also see that some of the most common skills needed to transition the workforce are: Biology; Chemistry; Mathematics; Processing Information; and Documenting & Recording Information. Many of the skills needed in emerging occupations, like food production and making decisions & problem solving are already found within the labor force.

**Table 9
Related Occupations to Agricultural Business & Food Technology**

Related Occupations		Median Wages	Overlapping Skills and Education	Required Areas for Improvement	
Agribusiness & Food Technology	Emerging Occupation: Food Scientists and Technologists	\$ 27.46			
	Career Pathways	Food Service Managers	\$ 20.78	Food Production, Interacting with Computers	Chemistry, Biology, Processing Information, Interpreting the Meaning of Information for Others
		Cooks, Institutional and Cafeteria	\$ 10.65	Food Production, Getting Information	Chemistry, Biology, Documenting/Recording Information, Analyzing Data or Information
		Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	\$ 17.88	Biology, Documenting/Recording Information	Food Production, Production & Processing, Thinking Creatively, Getting Information
	Emerging Occupation: Biological Technicians	\$ 19.86			
	Career Pathways	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	\$ 15.60	Design, Making Decisions and Solving Problems	Chemistry; Biology; Processing Information; Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events
		Physical Therapists Assistants	\$ 19.90	Medicine & Dentistry, Making Decisions and Solving Problems	Biology, Mathematics, Processing Information, Documenting/Recording Information
Dental Assistants		\$ 16.11	Medicine & Dentistry, Interpreting the Meaning of Information for Others	Chemistry; Mathematics; Processing Information; Estimating the Quantifiable Characteristics of Products, Events, or Information	

*Skills data available through O*Net (www.onetcenter.org)*

The requirements of the Education, Training, & Library occupational cluster are close to the current skill set of the region. There is a wide overlap of skills between the current labor force and those needed by the emerging occupations of the group. Skills and knowledge areas found within the current workforce like: customer & personal service; psychology; organizing, planning, & prioritizing work; and establishing & maintaining interpersonal relationships will be an asset within the Education, Training, & Library group of jobs. The current workforce lacked some of the formal education required for the occupations within the cluster. The regional workforce showed a need for coursework in the areas of education & training; English language; and clerical. Most of the occupations within Education, Training, & Library required between an associate's degree and a bachelor's degree.

From the figure below, we also see that some of the most common skills needed to transition the workforce are: Education & Training; English Language; Customer & Personal Service; Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates; and Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work.

Table 10
Related Occupations to Education, Training, & Library

Related Occupations		Median Wages	Overlapping Skills and Education	Required Areas for Improvement	
Primary/Secondary and Vocational Education	Emerging Occupation: Training & Development Specialists		\$ 21.84		
	Career Pathways	Rehabilitation Counselors	\$ 12.38	Psychology; Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events	Education and Training; Clerical; Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates; Training and Teaching Others
		Teacher Assistants	\$ 9.73	English Language; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	Education and Training; Customer and Personal Service; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work; Training and Teaching Others
		Library Technicians	\$ 10.93	Customer and Personal Service; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	Sociology and Anthropology; Psychology; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work; Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates
	Emerging Occupation: Instructional Coordinators		\$ 28.92		
	Career Pathways	Social and Human Service Assistants	\$ 12.54	Customer and Personal Service; Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships	Education and Training; English Language; Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work
		Community and Social Service Specialists	\$ 14.71	Psychology; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work	Education and Training; English Language; Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge; Organizing; Provide Consultation and Advice to Others
		Interpreters and Translators	\$ 15.98	English Language; Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge	Education and Training; Customer and Personal Service; Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work; Provide Consultation and Advice to Others

Skills data available through O*Net (www.onetcenter.org)

Conclusion

A Skillshed examines the interaction between the current supply of workers and the current demand for their skills by employers; also, it measures the difference between the current set of skills and education held by the regional workforce and that set of skills and education required for emerging occupations.

A region must develop a plan to meet the current needs of the labor market by ensuring that its workforce is prepared with the necessary skills. At the same time, the region must also help its labor market transition into a workforce with the skills and education required by emerging occupations.

An important note is that the data collected and used in this report, other than that from the Workforce Needs Assessment, is from before the collapse of the financial sector and the ensuing governmental response. More data will be available in the coming year to better assess the recession's effect on employment and industrial growth. The Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate industry will certainly not be as highly demanded as was originally thought while employment in Social Services, and possibly, Public Administration will increase.

Key Findings:

- Almost half of the supply of workers in the region (46.2%) currently work in the following occupational categories:
 - Management
 - Office & Administrative Support
 - Education, Training, & Library
 - More specifically, more than a quarter of the workforce (28.3%) are working in the following occupations:
 - Teachers & Instructors, All Other
 - Chief Executives & Self-Employed
 - Managers, All Other
 - Registered Nurses
 - Farmers & Ranchers
 - Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
 - The current education and skills of the workforce most closely resemble the education and skills of three occupational categories designated as knowledge clusters:
 - Healthcare
 - Agricultural Business & Food Production
 - Education, Training, & Library
 - The occupational categories with the highest projected annualized employment growth (2008-2018) are as follows:
 - Healthcare Support (2.5%)
 - Computer & Mathematical (2.1%)
 - Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (2.0%)
 - Business & Financial Operations (1.8%)
 - The occupations within the knowledge cluster occupational groups with the highest projected annualized employment growth (2008-2018) within the region are as follows:
 - Medical Scientists (4.3%)
 - Physician Assistants (3.5%)
 - Veterinarians (2.7%)
 - Training & Development Specialists (2.6%)
 - Health Educators (2.6%)
 - Water & Liquid Waste Treatment Plant and System Operators (1.7%)
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