

# DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

# JOB VACANCY STUDY

A Profile of  
Job Openings  
in Utah

See the entire report at:  
<http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/jvs2008>



## M E T R O P O L I T A N U T A H

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007  
Nate Talley, Economist

The Job Vacancy Study (JVS) is designed to gauge the characteristics of the current demand for labor in Utah. JVS can help job seekers identify occupations in demand and can assist employers in recognizing the existence of skill shortages and labor gaps. Nearly 3,500 employers were surveyed during the fourth quarter of 2007. The JVS Metropolitan region includes Salt Lake, Utah, Wasatch, Weber, Summit, Morgan, Davis, Tooele and Juab counties. This area accounts for over 80 percent of Utah's labor market activity.

### Region Summary

- The job vacancy rate for the Metropolitan region measured 3.3 percent, meaning there were 3.3 vacancies for every 100 jobs during the fourth quarter of 2007. This is up from 2.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2005. The current vacancy rate translates into approximately 34,700 open jobs at any time during the survey period.
- The average advertised wage for job openings surveyed was \$13.10/hr, up from \$12.20/hr as measured in 2005. After adjusting for inflation, however, the average wage for the fourth quarter of 2007 openings is only 20 cents higher than the 2005 offering.
- DWS conducted the JVS for the first time in 2004. Since then, metropolitan Utah's economic environment has rapidly changed, with top-tier job growth and unemployment rates outperforming the national average. Complementing these indicators have been steadily increasing job vacancy rates of 2.2 in 2004, 2.9 in 2005 and 3.3 in 2007. However, some vacancy rates in key industries are down since 2005 and that may be signaling a waning demand for labor in some of Utah's higher-paying sectors.

### Key Industries

- Eight of 17 publishable industry groups witnessed an increase in job openings since the fourth quarter of 2005.
- The construction, retail trade, healthcare and food and accommodation industries accounted for over 50 percent of the job openings.
- The construction industry could be regarded as the hallmark of contrast since the last time vacancies were studied. In 2005, the construction industry posted a vacancy rate of 5.3, an average advertised wage of \$16.30/hr and an estimated 3,100 openings. In the fourth quarter of 2007, the vacancy rate fell to 3.9 and the average advertised wage dropped to \$14.90/hr (even before accounting for inflation). The estimated number of openings in the region increased to 3,449, but as seen in the reduction in vacancy rate, the number of openings relative to employment in the industry declined.

- The requirements needed of applicants to be eligible for vacancies in the construction industry have also notably changed since last surveyed. In 2005, 46 percent of the industry's openings required post secondary education or training and 67 percent required related experience. Currently, only 30 percent of the industry's openings require postsecondary education or training and only 40 percent require related experience. This phenomenon, coupled with the decrease in the average advertised wage, indicates that lower-skill, high-turnover positions are accounting for much more of the industry's vacancies than they did in 2005.
- If the construction industry is the hallmark of contrast since 2005, the healthcare and social assistance industry could be regarded as the banner for status quo. Healthcare was a leading industry for vacancies in 2005 and in 2007 it was one of only three industries that witnessed both an increase in vacancy rate and an above-average offered wage.
- The healthcare industry appears to be experiencing continued symptoms of labor gaps. Forty-seven percent of the industry's vacancies were open for longer than 60 days or considered "always open" by an employer.
- Nurses, both registered and licensed-vocational, as well as nursing aides, dominate the openings in the health-care industry by accounting for 43 percent of the vacancies
- The healthcare industry dwarfed all industries—other than the professional, scientific and technical industry—with regard to the need for skilled labor. Sixty-six percent of the openings in the industry required some form of postsecondary training.
- Like in 2005, the professional, technical and scientific industry offered the highest average wage for openings at \$21.20/hr and required at least a Bachelor's degree 41 percent of the time.
- The retail trade industry was affected by natural seasonality as 39 percent of the openings were for temporary status and 56 percent were for part-time employment
- Openings in the management, finance, information, manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical industries offered some form of employer-provided benefit 80 percent of the time.

## Education and Experience

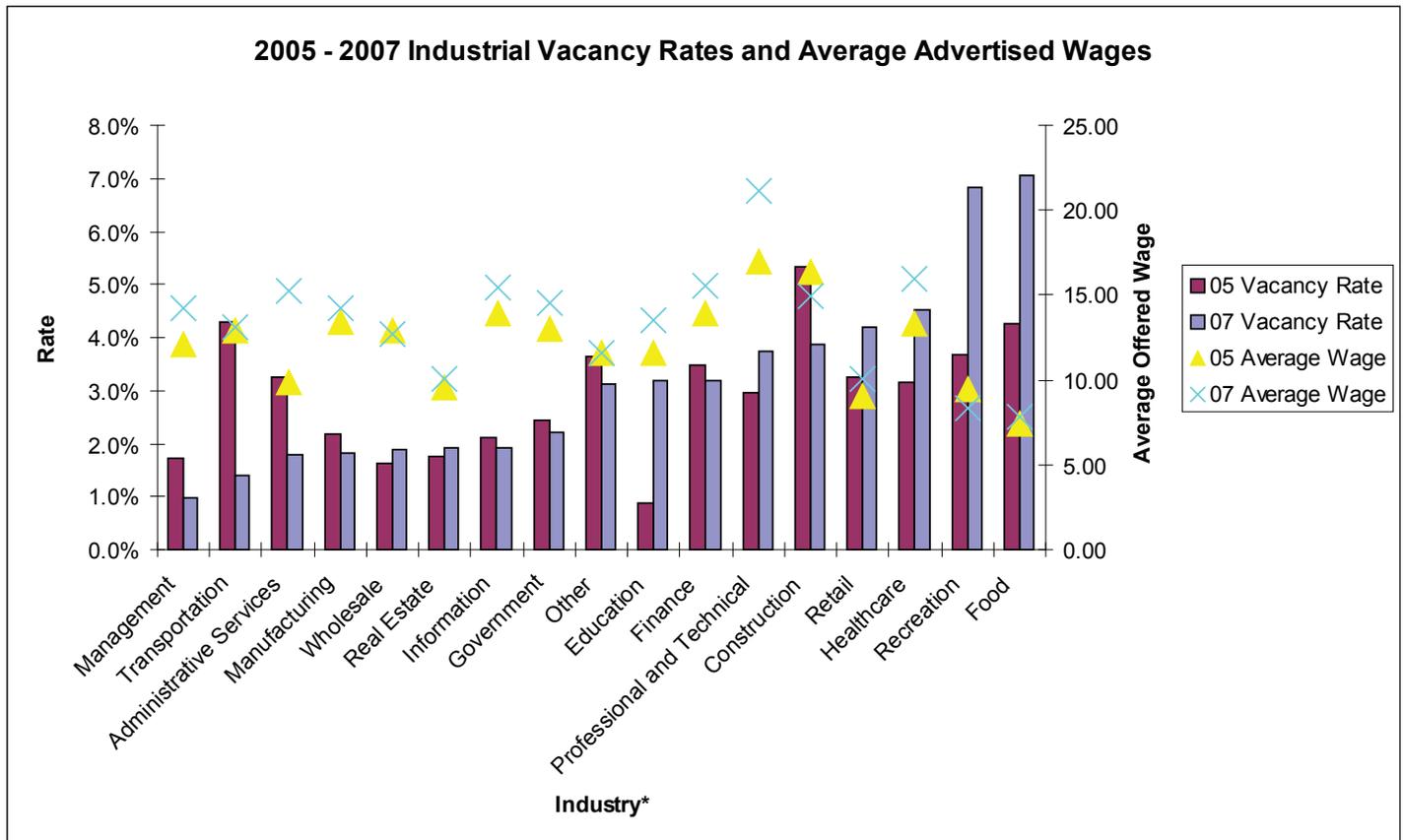
- Seventy-one percent of the job vacancies surveyed required no postsecondary training. This statistic is influenced by the natural presence of turnover in the labor market. Jobs that are predisposed to high-turnover are normally identified as occupations that do not require much, if any, education or training. And by definition, high-turnover jobs are open more frequently than other occupations. Hence, education requirements by area tend to be bottom-heavy towards little or no education.
- The average advertised wage for openings that required more than a high school diploma or GED was \$20.70/hr over twice the advertised wage for openings that did not require postsecondary training.
- Unlike in years past, 43.2 percent of job openings required no work experience
- Related work experience is valued by employers. The average advertised wage for openings requiring related experience has increased to \$19.30/hr, up from \$16.30/hr in 2005 and \$14.90/hr the year before.

## Key Occupations

- Despite the fact that 71 percent of the job vacancies required no education beyond high school, there were still many high-skill, in-demand occupations that required education and training. Occupations differ from industries in that a particular occupation may be found in many industries.
- An occupational vacancy rate is the number of open occupations divided by the total occupational employment. Jobs with high occupational vacancy rates are those that had many openings relative to the total employment in that occupation.
- Openings for difficult-to-fill occupations are generally characterized by being open for longer than 60 days or “always open”, having strong average advertised wages and requiring some form of training or education beyond high school.

## Status and Benefits

- The majority of job openings were for full-time, permanent employment
- Sixty-three percent of all openings provided at least some kind of benefit
- The offering of benefits was heavily influenced by whether the opening was for full or part-time employment. Seventy-four percent of full-time openings offered some kind of medical benefit whereas part-time jobs only offered it 22 percent of the time.



\*Estimates for openings in the education industry were subject to more variability than in other industries, primarily due to methodological challenges associated with quantifying those openings.

## Occupations with the Highest Job Vacancy Rates

Occupation	Vacancy Rate	Estimated Openings	Percent Permanent	Percent Full-time	Average Advertised Wage
Life Guards, Ski Patrol and other Recreational Protective Service Workers	21.5%	187	36%	65%	\$8.30
New Accounts Clerks	19.2%	150	100%	76%	\$13.90
Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	16.4%	137	98%	29%	\$7.90
HVAC Technicians	14.6%	291	100%	100%	\$17.90
Civil Engineers	14.5%	235	98%	91%	\$24.70
Office Machine Operators, Except Computers	13.5%	95	100%	100%	\$9.30
Combined Food Preparation and Service Workers	12.1%	1,895	100%	11%	\$ 7.10
Fire Fighters	11.9%	217	100%	5%	\$11.50
Maids	11.5%	575	80%	73%	\$8.00
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	11.3%	315	0%	77%	\$8.00
Electricians	10.6%	539	100%	100%	\$15.80

## Most Difficult-to-Fill Occupational Openings

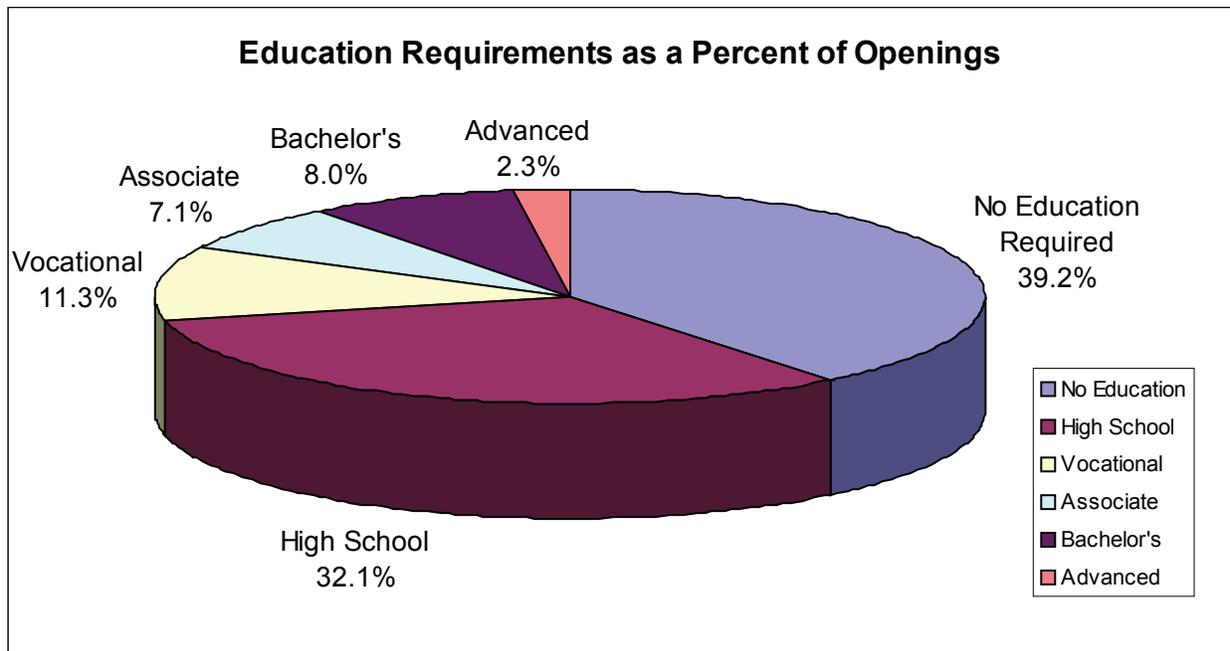
Occupation	Vacancy Rate	Estimated Openings	Average Advertised Wage	Percent Open 60 Days or Always Open	Prevalent Training
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, Brazers	3.7%	126	\$15.50	100%	Applied Technology
Industrial Engineers	4.1%	59	\$32.10	100%	Bachelor's Degree
Graphic Designers	5.1%	100	\$16.10	90%	Associate/Applied Technology
Machinists	2.0%	59	\$19.90	89%	Applied Technology
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1.4%	54	\$19.40	78%	Applied Technology
Civil Engineers	14.5%	235	\$24.70	76%	Bachelor's Degree
Computer Programmers	2.6%	157	\$23.30	65%	Bachelor's Degree
Engineering Managers	5.8%	67	\$36.60	61%	Bachelor's/Advanced Degree
HVAC Technicians	14.6%	291	\$17.90	61%	Applied Technology
Registered Nurses	8.9%	1,264	\$22.70	43%	Associate/Bachelor's Degree
Pharmacists	9.4%	151	\$41.00	41%	Advanced Degree

## Top Ten Openings Requiring a Bachelor's or Advanced Degree

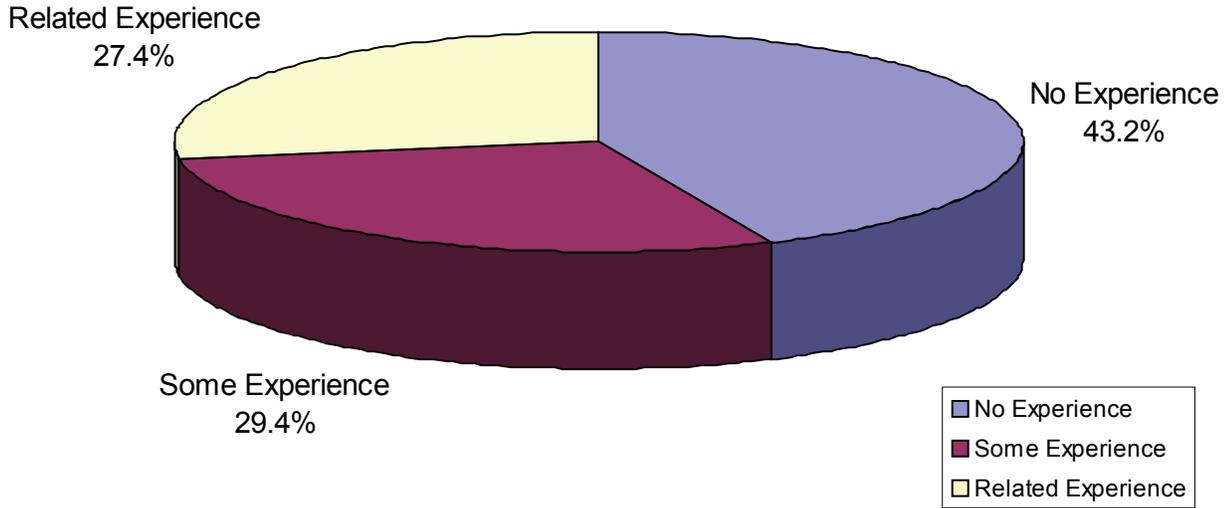
Occupation	Estimated Openings	Vacancy Rate	Average Advertised Wage
Civil Engineers	235	14.5%	\$24.70
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	198	6.5%	\$39.30
Computer Programmers	157	2.6%	\$23.30
Pharmacists	151	9.4%	\$41.00
Accountants and Auditors	106	1.4%	\$19.90
Engineering Managers	67	5.8%	\$36.60
Compliance Officers, Except Construction, Health, Transportation and Safety	61	2.6%	\$29.20
Industrial Engineers	59	4.1%	\$32.00
Electrical Engineers	51	6.8%	\$42.40
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	47	1.0%	\$36.70

## Top Ten Openings Requiring Associate Degree or Applied Technology Training

Occupation	Estimated Openings	Vacancy Rate	Average Advertised Wage
Registered Nurses	1264	8.9%	\$22.70
Electricians	539	10.6%	\$15.80
Nursing Aides	496	7.1%	\$9.60
Medical Assistants	224	5.1%	\$12.80
Fire Fighters	217	11.9%	\$11.50
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	200	9.1%	\$17.50
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	191	3.7%	\$16.90
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, Brazers	126	3.7%	\$15.50
Graphic Designers	100	5.1%	\$16.10



### Experience Requirements as Percent of Openings



### Percent of Openings vs. Hourly Advertised Wage

