

Occupational Outlook Research Guide

Instructions and purpose: As you search for a future career, it's important to consider what jobs and industries are growing in your area. If an occupation is growing, that means that it is more likely than other occupations to have a significant number of job openings over the next several years, making it easier for you to find work and advance in your career. If an occupation or industry is declining that means there will be fewer openings and it will be harder to find work. If an occupation or industry is neither growing nor declining that means that it will have the same number of job openings in the future as it does now.

When choosing a career path it is important to consider your skills and interests, as well as whether or not it will be easy or difficult for you to find a job in that occupation or industry in your local area.

Suggestions for Research

National Job Outlook Information

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Overview of 2008-2018 Projections:

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm>

This report outlines the areas of the economy that are expected to grow and decline. While exploring the report, consider the following questions:

- Which industries are expected to grow over the next decade?
- Which occupations are experiencing the fastest growth?
- Which occupations are expected to have the greatest change in wage and salary?

State and Local Job Outlook Information

To find out more specific information about what jobs are growing in your area, try searching on Google for "Occupational Projections + the name of your state". Or search for your state's labor website and follow links to the "employment outlook" page: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgjobout.htm>

Consider the following questions when reviewing these resources:

- Compare the growth of certain occupations in your specific area and nationally. How is the outlook the same or different?
- Do these occupations allow for further growth and advancement?

- Try searching for information for your city or county. Does this information differ from the rest of the state?

Specific Career Research

If you have a specific job in mind, you can search for it on O*Net Online: <http://www.onetonline.org/>. Type the name of the industry or the occupation into the search bar. If it appears in the search results with a star that says “Bright Outlook,” that means that job is expected to grow quickly in the next several years.

Follow-Up Questions

After researching these careers, their average pay, projected growth, and opportunities for advancement, consider the following questions:

- What surprised you?
- What factors do you see in your area that contributes to why some jobs may be growing and others may be declining?
- Did this information change your ideas for what you might want to do in the future? If yes, how? If no, why not?