



Job outlook for college graduates

by Jill N. Lacey and Olivia Crosby

You've heard it again and again: Having a college degree leads to higher earnings and more career opportunities. But is it true?

For the most part, it is. When it comes to paychecks and prospects, conventional wisdom is right. On average, college graduates earn more money, experience less unemployment, and have a wider variety of career options than other workers do. A college degree also makes it easier to enter many of the fastest growing, highest paying occupations. In some occupations, in fact, having a degree is the only way to get your start.

According to statistics and projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), college graduates will continue to have bright prospects. Data consistently show that workers who have a bachelor's or graduate degree have higher earnings and lower unemployment than workers who have less education. And between 2002 and 2012, more than 14 million job openings are projected to be filled by workers who have a bachelor's or graduate degree and who are entering an occupation for the first time.

A college education can be costly, of course, in terms of both time and money. But the rewards can be bigger than the sacrifices if a degree helps you to qualify for occupations that interest you.

Keep reading to learn about the benefits of having a college degree and the demand for college graduates.

You'll also find out which occupations are expected to offer the most job openings for people who are entering them for the first time. Many of these occupations employ workers who have more education than a bachelor's degree. A box beginning on page 21 shows which occupations usually offer the biggest financial rewards for getting a graduate degree.

In this article, a college graduate is defined as a person who has a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral (Ph.D.) degree or a professional degree, such as one in law or medicine. For a discussion of associate degrees or other levels of education, see the companion article, "Job outlook for people who don't have a bachelor's degree," beginning on page 3 in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

College graduates: In demand and doing well

More people are going to college now than ever before, in part because of the career advantages that a college degree confers. College-educated workers' higher earnings and lower unemployment are good reasons to go to college, and these benefits are also evidence of the demand for college graduates. Higher earnings show that employers are willing to pay more to have college graduates work for them. And lower unemployment means that

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college graduates are more likely to find a job when they want one.

More people going to college

The number of people who have a college degree has been increasing steadily. According to Current Population Survey data, the number of people aged 25 and older who have a college degree grew from 35 million to 52 million between 1992 and 2004, an increase of almost 50 percent. By mid-2004, nearly 28 percent of people aged 25 and older had a bachelor's or graduate degree. (See chart 1.)

Higher earnings, lower unemployment

As a whole, college-educated workers earn more money than workers who have less education. In 2003, workers who had a bachelor's degree had median weekly earnings of \$900, compared with \$554 a week for high school graduates—that's a difference of \$346 per week, or a

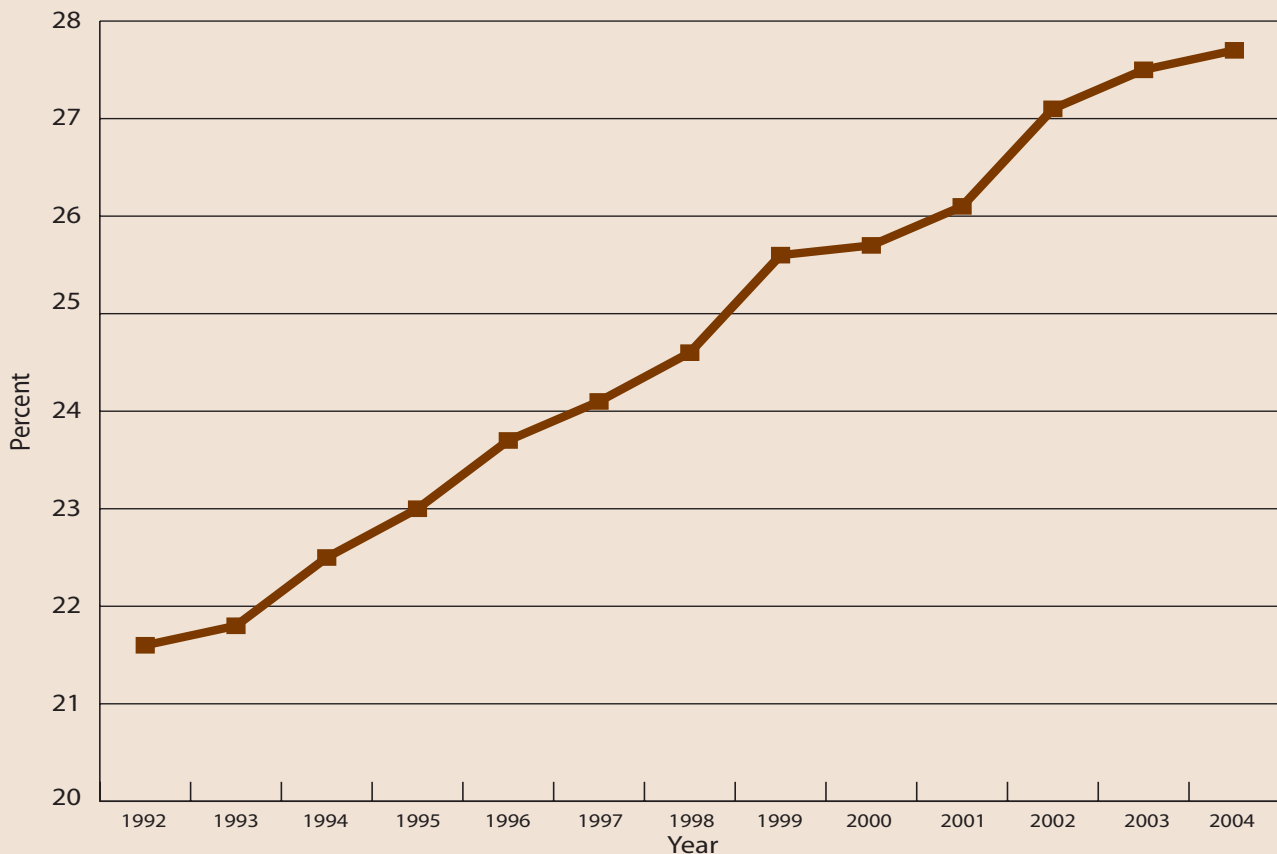
62 percent jump in median earnings. (Median earnings show that half of the workers in the educational category earned more than that amount, and half earned less.)

For workers who had a master's, doctoral, or professional degree, median earnings were even higher. In addition to earning more money, workers who had more education were also less likely to be unemployed. Chart 2 shows the median earnings and unemployment rates for workers at various levels of educational attainment.

Taken together, higher earnings and more regular employment amount to large differences in income over a lifetime. (See, for example, "More education means higher earnings—for life: Synthetic worklife earnings estimates by highest level of educational attainment," the OChart in the fall 2002 *Quarterly*.)

Higher earnings for workers who have a college degree are part of a long-term trend. Even when adjusted for inflation, the wages of college-educated workers have

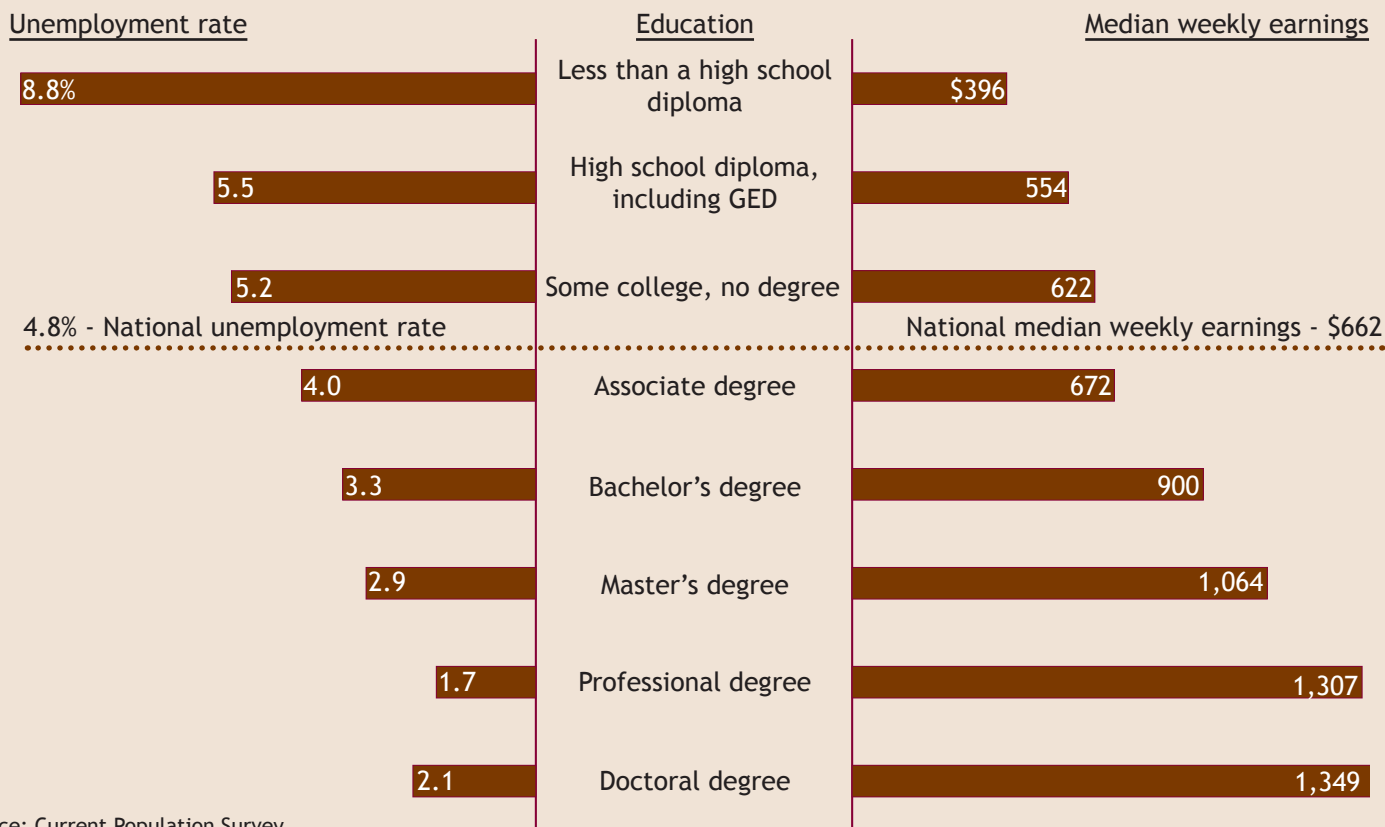
Chart 1
Percent of population aged 25 and older with a bachelor's or graduate degree, 1992-2004



Source: Current Population Survey

Chart 2

Unemployment and earnings for full-time workers aged 25 and over, by educational attainment, 2003



Source: Current Population Survey

been rising over the past decade. (See chart 3.) Moreover, the earnings for college-educated workers have been increasing faster than the earnings for workers who do not have a bachelor's degree.

The trouble with averages

Statistics about college graduates paint a rosy—and numerically accurate—picture of overall employment. But the data are based on college graduates as a whole. For every graduate who earns more than the median, another earns less. And while unemployment rates are low overall, many college graduates sometimes have trouble finding work, especially if they wait for the type of job they want.

The career prospects of individuals depend on many factors besides having a college degree. These factors include the local job market, the type of degree they have, their level of experience and skill, and the occupation they are trying to enter.

Openings and where they will be

Between 2002 and 2012, BLS projects 56 million job openings for workers who are entering an occupation for the first time. Of these, at least 14 million are expected to

be filled by college-educated workers. More than half of these openings are expected to come from the need to fill newly created jobs.

The remaining openings for college-educated workers are projected to come from the need to replace workers who leave an occupation permanently. With many of today's college-educated workers poised to retire, replacement needs are expected to be great, especially in large occupations.

In some occupations, most workers have bachelor's or graduate degrees. In other occupations, education levels are more varied.

Many of the occupations that are expected to have the most openings for college graduates are in the business, computers and engineering, education, counseling, and healthcare fields.

“Pure college” occupations

For this analysis, it is assumed that each future job opening will be for a college-educated worker. In these “pure college” occupations, at least 60 percent of current workers aged 25-44 have a bachelor's or graduate degree, fewer than 20 percent have a high school diploma or less education, and fewer than 20

percent have some college courses but less education than a bachelor's degree. Even if some workers do not have a bachelor's or graduate degree, all openings are counted as being for college-educated workers because that most accurately reflects the job market new workers face. (For more about the methods used to count job openings, see the section beginning on page 25.)

BLS projects that pure-college occupations will provide about 6.8 million openings over the 2002-12 decade for college graduates who are entering an occupation for the first time. Chart 4 shows the 20 pure-college occupations expected to provide the most openings during the projections decade. Like nearly all pure-college occupations, all but one of the occupations on the chart have earnings above \$27,380, the 2002 median for all workers.

Despite high numbers of job openings, jobseekers can face strong competition when trying to enter

some occupations, such as public relations specialists or management analysts. Because these occupations offer high earnings and prestige and because workers can qualify with many different college majors, the number of qualified workers who want these jobs could be greater than the number of openings. Analyses of job competition are possible for a few occupations, ones for which there is anecdotal evidence or for which other data exist. To qualify for many of the occupations shown on chart 4, workers need more than a bachelor's degree. In three of the occupations—lawyers, physicians and surgeons, and pharmacists—a professional degree is required. Similarly, physical therapists now train for their occupation only in a master's or doctoral degree program.

In other occupations, educational requirements are more flexible. About one-fourth of management analysts have a master's degree, for example, but many analysts

do not have education beyond a bachelor's degree. School teachers, too, often have a graduate degree, but many teachers earn that degree after they begin their careers; while employed, they take graduate-level courses to gain skills, qualify for higher salaries, and maintain certification. In many occupations, employment and advancement opportunities improve with attainment of a graduate degree, even when one is not required for career entry.

Education level often determines the type of work a person can do within an occupation. Psychologists, for example, usually need a doctoral degree to

Chart 3
Real (inflation-adjusted) average annual earnings, by educational attainment, 1991-2001

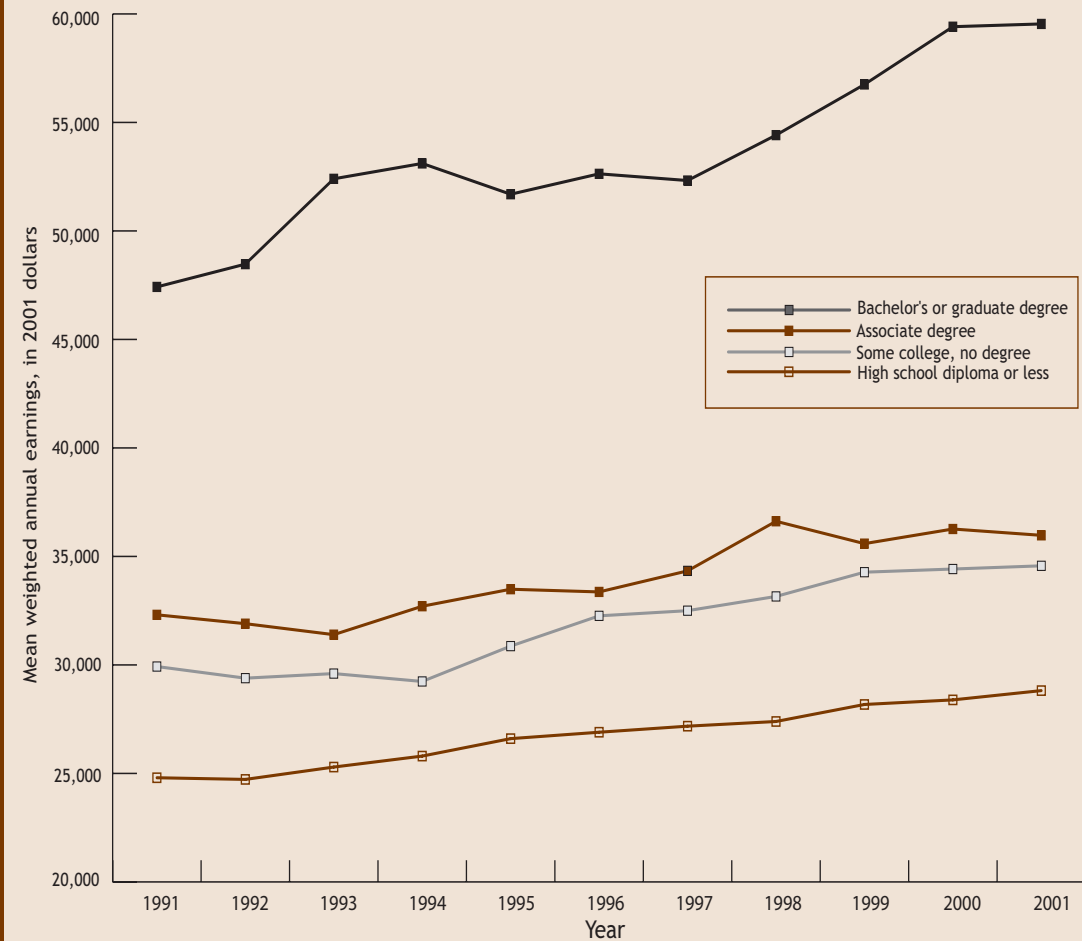
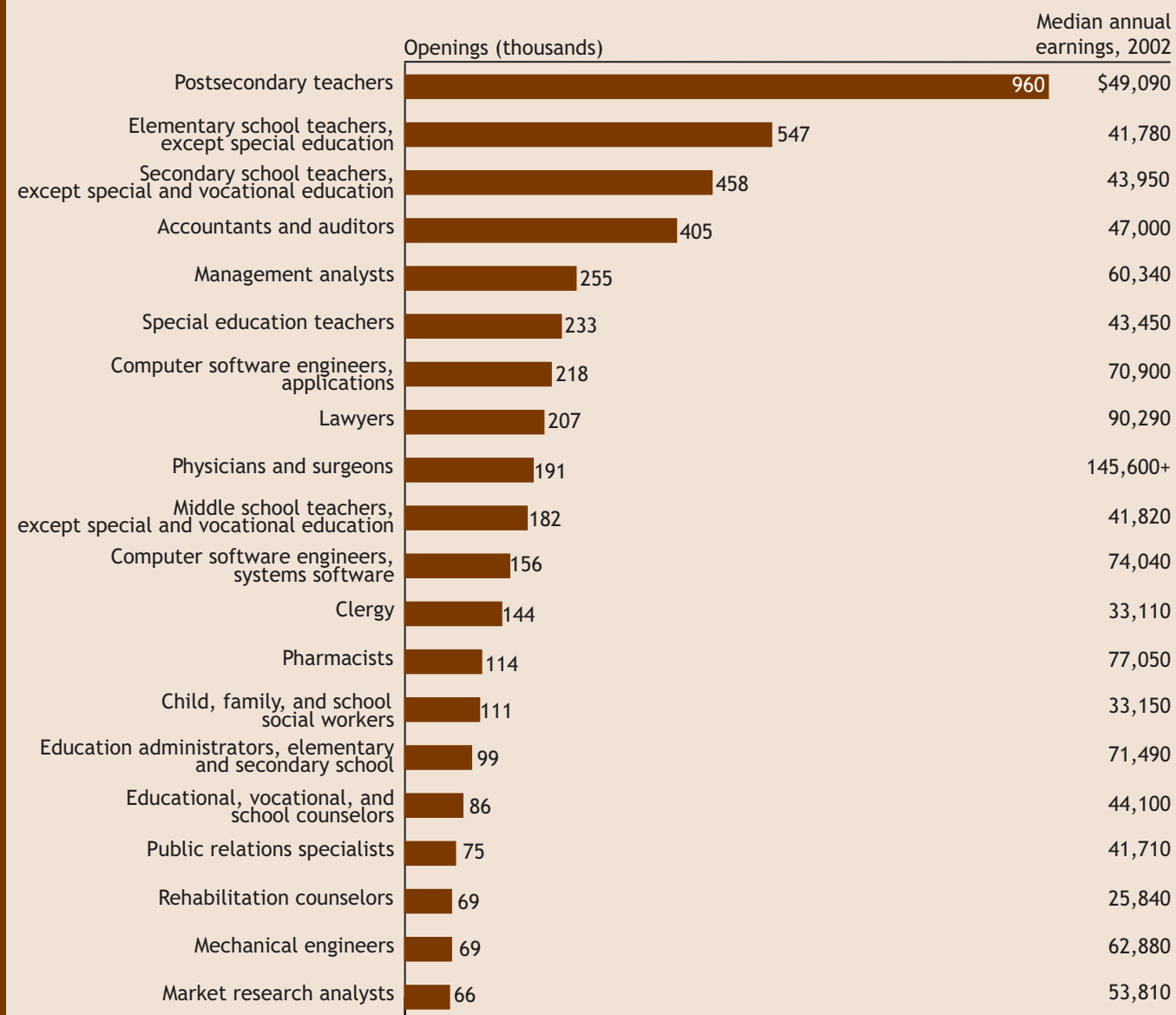


Chart 4

“Pure college” occupations with the most job openings for college graduates entering the occupation for the first time, projected 2002-12



do independent, clinical work, but some school psychologists do not need this level of education. Social workers can get some jobs with a bachelor’s degree, but to work in a clinical setting, they often need a graduate degree.

“Mixed education” occupations

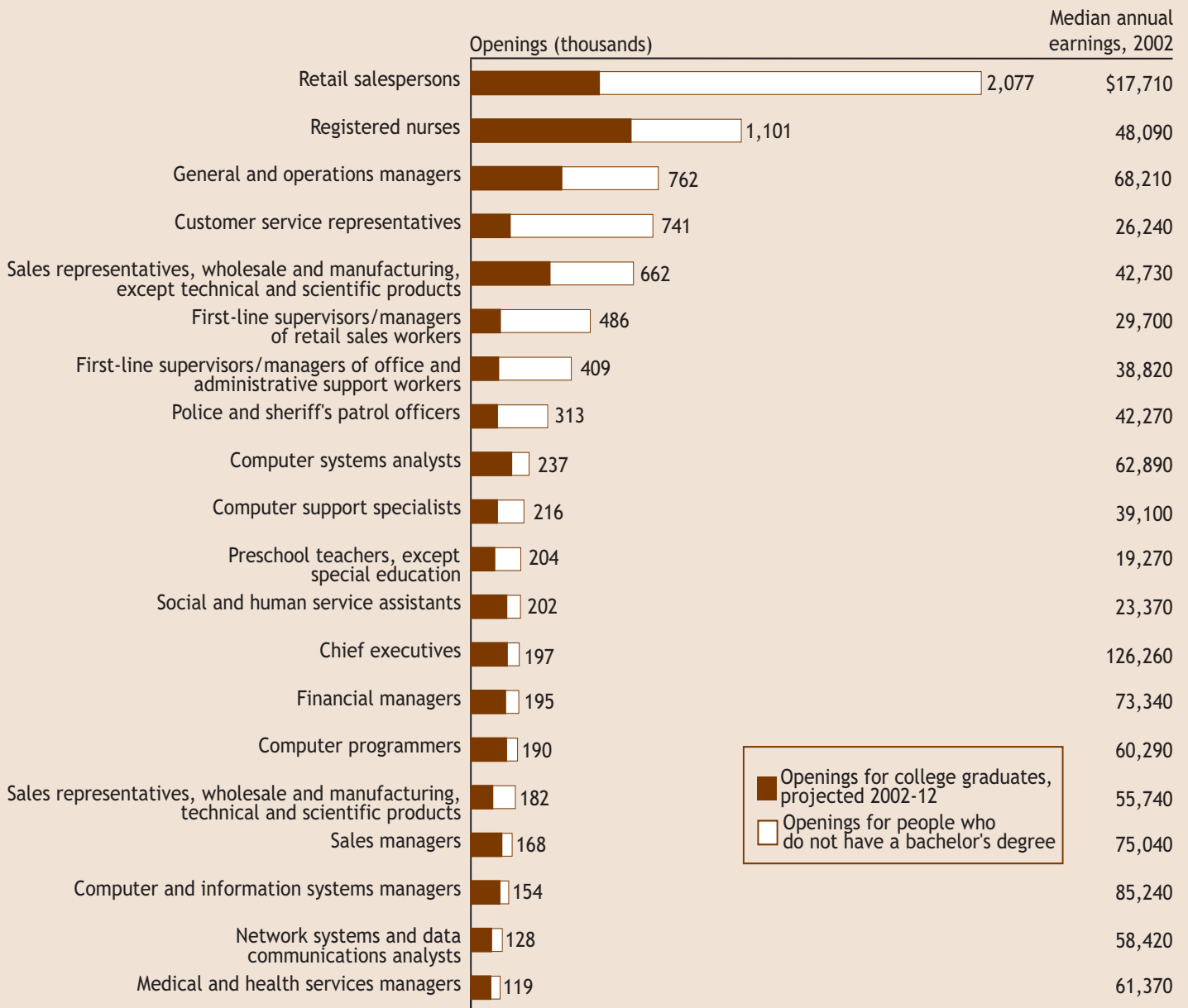
Many college graduates work in occupations that employ workers who have a variety of education levels. Over the 2002-12 decade, about 23 million openings are projected to be in occupations in which the number of college-educated workers is significant—20 percent or more—but for which college is not the only level of education workers have. For example, of the 1.1 million job openings projected for registered nurses, over 650,000 are project-

ed to be filled by bachelor’s or graduate degree holders based on current educational attainment patterns. Overall, of the 23 million job openings in these “mixed education” occupations, BLS expects 7.5 million to be filled by college graduates.

Chart 5 shows the mixed-education occupations that are expected to provide the most openings over the projections decade for college graduates who are entering an occupation for the first time. In several of these occupations, such as registered nurses, police and sheriff’s patrol officers, and wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives, the education levels of workers have been rising. When hiring workers, some employers prefer their new employees to be college graduates, even though many

Chart 5

“Mixed education” occupations with the most job openings for college graduates entering the occupation for the first time, projected 2002-12



existing workers do not have a degree.

Sometimes, as is often the case for preschool teachers and social and human service assistants, having a degree benefits workers beyond helping them get the job. It may qualify workers to take on more complex tasks in the occupation, for example, or increase workers’ opportunities for advancement and responsibility.

In other occupations—such as retail salespersons and customer service representatives—workers from every education level are represented even though most qualify after a few weeks or months of on-the-job training. A degree is not required, and many college graduates choose these occupations for reasons unrelated to education or training, such as plentiful opportunities or flexible hours.

Mixed-education occupations make it difficult to measure with certainty the demand for college graduates. Defining a college-level occupation is highly subjective. Some openings in an occupation might require a degree; for other openings, a degree might be useful; and for still other openings, a degree might not make much of a difference.

Occupations with increasing demand: Trends and themes

As a whole, occupations that employ mostly college graduates are expected to gain new jobs faster than other types of occupations. Between 2002 and 2012, pure-college occupations are projected to grow 22 percent *(continued on page 24)*

The payoff for graduate school: Earnings premiums by degree

Table 1 shows the most common areas of study for college graduates by academic degree. In many occupations, earning an advanced degree usually leads to higher earnings. This difference in earnings is commonly referred to as an earnings premium. But an advanced degree is worth more in some career fields than in others.

Table 2 shows how much more money was earned in various occupations by workers who have an advanced degree compared with workers who have a bachelor's degree. Data are reported only for occupations in which 10,000 or more workers held a bachelor's degree and another 10,000 or more workers held a graduate or professional degree. The information in the table is based on 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 data from the Current Population Survey. The data from these 4 years were averaged to increase statistical reliability by increasing the number of workers surveyed.

For most occupations, having an advanced degree increased median earnings—and the higher the degree, the larger the earnings premium. On average, having a master's degree increased earnings by 21 percent over a bachelor's degree. Among occupations for which there were reliable data, almost all offered an increase in median earnings for workers who have a master's degree. Physical therapists and network and communications systems administrators were exceptions, perhaps because many of the workers who have an advanced degree in these occupations were recent entrants and so earned less.

Earnings premiums were highest in occupations that

usually require an advanced degree. Psychologists have the highest earnings premium of any occupation, with master's degree holders earning 78 percent and doctoral degree holders earning 132 percent more than bachelor's degree holders. Many jobs in this field require a doctorate.

In addition, education-related occupations paid higher than average earnings premiums for both master's and doctoral degrees.

Occupations such as management analysts, counselors, social workers, biological scientists, and market and survey researchers also paid higher than average premiums for a graduate degree.

The financial benefits of advanced degrees might be understated in many occupations because newer workers are more likely to have an advanced degree, and these workers might earn less because they have less experience. The occupation of pharmacist, for example, averages some of the lowest earnings premiums for advanced degrees. In part, this is because new pharmacists now need a professional degree, so the workers who have a bachelor's degree almost always have more experience than other workers do.

Overall, occupations that provide above-average earnings premiums for advanced degrees are usually those in which most workers have at least a bachelor's degree. Earnings premiums are the highest in occupations that value advanced degrees. If a bachelor's degree is the most education that is required in an occupation, earning an advanced degree will not always increase median earnings significantly.

Table 1
Number of college degrees earned and most common areas of study, 2001-02

Degree	Number of degrees earned, 2001-02	Most common areas of study
Bachelor's	1,375,000	Business management and administrative services
		Education
		Social sciences and history
Master's	491,000	Education
		Business management and administrative services
		Health professions and related sciences
Doctoral	45,000	Education
		Engineering
		Psychology
		Biological and life sciences
Professional	82,000	Law and legal studies
		Health professions and related sciences
		Theological studies and religious vocations
Total	1,993,000	

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Table 2
Employment and median earnings by occupation and educational attainment, 2000-03

Occupation	Median weekly earnings				Earnings premiums (percent)		
	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Professional degree	Doctoral degree	Master's over bachelor's	Professional over bachelor's	Doctoral over master's
Total, all occupations	\$838	\$1,016	\$1,240	\$1,280	21%	48%	26%
Accountants and auditors	868	1,078	1,053		24	21	
Actors, producers, and directors	917	1,072			17		
Architects, except naval	1,049	1,066			2		
Athletes, coaches, umpires, and related workers	740	745			1		
Chief executives	1,657	1,765	1,664	1,907	7	0.4	8
Clergy	702	731	865	895	4	23	22
Clinical laboratory technologists and technicians	766	856			12		
Compliance officers, except agriculture, construction, health and safety, and transportation	960	1,090			14		
Computer and information systems managers	1,415	1,640			16		
Computer and mathematical occupations	1,080	1,237	1,326	1,442	15	23	17
Computer programmers	1,037	1,141			10		
Computer scientists and systems analysts	1,099	1,201			9		
Computer software engineers	1,201	1,363		1,579	13		16
Computer support specialists	847	996			18		
Database administrators	1,158	1,368			18		
Network and computer systems administrators	1,069	1,012			-5		
Network systems and data communications analysts	1,026	1,171			14		
Operations research analysts	1,058	1,140			8		
Counselors, social workers, and other community and social service specialists	630	820	946	926	30	50	13
Counselors	614	819			33		
Social workers	622	813			31		
Designers	769	970			26		
Dietitians and nutritionists	646	766			19		
Editors	769	965			25		
Education administrators	765	1,136	1,297	1,392	48	70	23
Elementary and middle school teachers	683	888	871	1,159	30	28	31

Employment and median earnings by occupation and educational attainment, 2000-03 (continued)

Occupation	Median weekly earnings				Earnings premiums (percent)		
	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Professional degree	Doctoral degree	Master's over bachelor's	Professional over bachelor's	Doctoral over master's
Engineering managers	\$1,526	\$1,667			9%		
Engineers	1,154	1,364	\$1,050	\$1,484	18	-9%	9%
Aerospace engineers	1,235	1,331			8		
Chemical engineers	1,304	1,429			10		
Civil engineers	1,081	1,252			16		
Computer hardware engineers	1,142	1,537			35		
Electrical and electronics engineers	1,221	1,440			18		
Environmental engineers	976	1,239			27		
Industrial engineers, including health and safety	1,092	1,250			14		
Mechanical engineers	1,147	1,373			20		
Financial managers	1,096	1,470			34		
Human resources managers	1,080	1,257			16		
Human resources, training, and labor relations specialists	813	1,035			27		
Lawyers	927	1,144	1,519	1,527	23	64	33
Librarians	636	848			33		
Life scientists	725	867	885	964	20	22	11
Biological scientists	672	892		908	33		2
Medical scientists	690	854		1,009	24		18
Loan counselors and officers	930	1,196			29		
Management analysts	1,131	1,413			25		
Marketing and sales managers	1,157	1,440			24		
Medical and health services managers	1,021	1,209	1,557	1,586	18	52	31
Personal financial advisors	1,089	1,394			28		
Pharmacists	1,338	1,377	1,402	1,366	3	5	-1
Physical scientists	894	1,060		1,387	19		31
Chemists and materials scientists	879	1,016		1,333	16		31
Environmental scientists and geoscientists	886	1,062			20		
Physical therapists	920	910			-1		
Physician assistants	1,085	1,143			5		
Physicians and surgeons	818	1,037	1,444	1,469	27	77	42
Police and sheriff patrol officers	845	984			16		
Postsecondary teachers	700	867	1,155	1,205	24	65	39
Preschool and kindergarten teachers	618	808			31		

Employment and median earnings by occupation and educational attainment, 2000-03 (continued)							
Occupation	Median weekly earnings				Earnings premiums (percent)		
	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Professional degree	Doctoral degree	Master's over bachelor's	Professional over bachelor's	Doctoral over master's
Public relations specialists	\$815	\$1,099			35%		
Purchasing managers	1,205	1,458			21		
Registered nurses	893	1,062	\$904		19	1%	
Secondary school teachers	734	914	922	\$1,108	25	26	21%
Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents	1,099	1,556			42		
Social and community service managers	745	912			22		
Social scientists and related workers	831	1,010		1,289	22		28
Market and survey researchers	851	1,175			38		
Psychologists	520	928		1,206	78		30
Special education teachers	670	889			33		
Tax examiners, collectors, preparers, and revenue agents	878	1,018			16		
Writers and authors	768	908			18		

Source: Current Population Survey. Data are not reported for those categories with fewer than 10,000 workers employed or for categories containing fewer than 50 observations.

(continued from page 20)

overall, considerably faster than the 15-percent average growth projected for all occupations. Eighteen of the 20 pure-college occupations in chart 4 are projected to grow faster than the 15-percent average for all occupations.

Looking at job growth is important because occupations that are gaining jobs quickly are, in effect, showing rapidly increasing demand for workers. Some of the economic trends that are creating growth in pure-college and mixed-education occupations are described below by career field.

Business, finance, and sales. The growing complexity of business is expected to increase the demand for college graduates in business and financial occupations. More workers will be needed to manage rising personal incomes, increased regulation of financial activity, and growing competition among businesses.

Sales occupations are expected to grow along with the overall economy. Although numerous workers in these occupations do not have a college degree, many others do. Having a degree is especially valued in occupations involving sales of complex scientific or technical

products.

Computers and engineering. The demand for new products and new technology is expected to continue to drive growth in computer and engineering occupations. Occupations in emerging engineering specialties, including biotechnology and environmental engineering, are expected to gain jobs rapidly over the projections decade. However, these specialties are expected to remain small and provide fewer openings than larger engineering specialties, such as mechanical and computer engineering.

Counseling, social service, and psychology. Numerous social trends are projected to increase the number of counselors, social workers, and psychologists needed over the 2002-12 decade. More schools are hiring trained counselors. At the same time, more people are seeking counseling for family problems, substance abuse, and mental disorders. And to ease overcrowding at prisons, many offenders are being sent instead to rehabilitation facilities—where counselors, social workers, and psychologists are employed to assist them.

Education. Most opportunities in the field of education will come from the need to replace the many teach-

ers and administrators who are expected to retire over the 2002-12 decade. But additional positions are projected because of efforts to reduce class sizes and because of increasing enrollments at colleges and universities.

Healthcare. As the population ages, the need for healthcare will increase, fueling the need for more healthcare practitioners. Moreover, improvements in medical technology will create more medical and rehabilitative treatments. Those treatments are prescribed and often administered by workers who have a college degree.

How these numbers were developed

There are many ways to measure job outlook by education, and each method has both strengths and limitations. This analysis focuses on future job openings because job openings show how many new workers will be able to enter an occupation.

Deciding which job openings will be filled by college graduates was more complicated. Counselors and job-seekers often ask which occupations are “college level.” But answering that question is difficult because workers in most occupations come from many different educational backgrounds. This analysis used the education levels of current workers as an objective way to account for this variation.

Like any analysis based on projections and estimates, however, this one has limitations to its accuracy. Understanding these limitations will help readers to better use the results.

Methods used

To estimate the demand for college graduates between 2002 and 2012, BLS analysts got specific. First, they projected the number of job openings for workers entering each of more than 500 occupations over the decade. Next, analysts estimated how many of those openings would be filled by college graduates.

Measuring job openings. Job openings come from two sources: The need to fill newly created jobs and the need to replace workers who retire or leave an occupation permanently for other reasons.

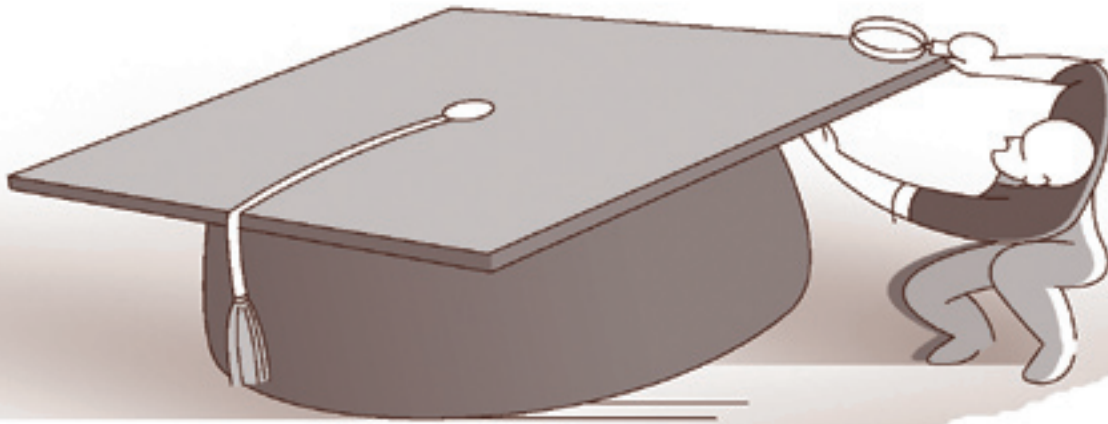
To estimate the number of newly created jobs, analysts projected how much each occupation would grow or decline between 2002 and 2012. An occupation might gain jobs for many reasons. Sometimes, the demand for a specific good or service creates the need for additional

workers in an occupation, such as when an increased use of computer software creates a greater need for software engineers. The way a good or service is provided can also lead to more jobs in an occupation. Rather than relying solely on teachers and administrators to guide and educate students, for example, more schools are hiring counselors and psychologists, creating more openings for those workers. In the same way, a decrease in the demand for a good or service or a change in production methods can reduce the number of jobs and openings in an occupation.

The second source of job openings is replacement needs. To estimate how many workers will need to be replaced during the projections decade, BLS analysts studied the ages of current workers and the length of time that workers in each occupation usually remain. In occupations that require high levels of training, workers tend to stay longer. In other occupations, especially those that have shorter training periods, workers tend to leave or retire more quickly.

Job openings for college graduates. After analysts projected the number of job openings for workers entering an occupation, they estimated how many of those openings would be for college graduates. Using information from 2000, 2001, and 2002 Current Population Survey data, analysts classified current workers’ educational attainment into one of three categories: A high school diploma or less, some college but no bachelor’s or graduate degree, or a bachelor’s or graduate degree. If at





The two surveys are different. The Current Population Survey is a household survey that asks workers themselves to give earnings, occupational, and other types of information; it includes self-employed workers. The Occupational

Employment Statistics survey, an establishment survey, asks employers to provide earnings and occupational information about their workers; it does not include the self-employed.

least 20 percent of workers in an occupation belonged to a given educational category, that level was deemed significant. Expected openings were divided among each of these significant education categories, according to how common each category was.

For example, the occupation of administrative services managers includes workers in each educational category: About 23 percent have a high school diploma or less, 37 percent have some college coursework or an associate degree but no bachelor's degree, and 41 percent have a bachelor's or graduate degree. Projected openings were divided among the education categories using those percentages.

For some occupations, a bachelor's or graduate degree was the only education level common enough to be significant. At least 60 percent of workers in the occupation were college graduates. And fewer than 20 percent of workers belonged to the other two educational categories. In these 115 "pure college" occupations, every projected opening was considered to be for a college graduate.

In addition to using the three educational attainment categories, this article provides specific information about the types of degrees commonly required in some occupations. This type of information comes from the occupational analyses conducted for the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

Earnings data. This analysis uses earnings data from two surveys: The Current Population Survey and the Occupational Employment Statistics survey. Earnings data from the Current Population Survey, which includes information about workers' education levels, were used to compare earnings by education. Earnings data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, which is more comprehensive, provide median earnings for an occupation as a whole.

Limitations of the data

To measure job openings for college graduates, BLS analysts needed to make assumptions about the future. First, analysts assumed that the education levels in each occupation would remain roughly the same over the 2002-12 decade. In reality, the educational characteristics of some occupations change over time. Many occupations—such as registered nurses and police officers—have had a gradual increase in the number of workers who have a bachelor's degree.

Analysts also ignored education levels that were uncommon in an occupation; as stated previously, at least 20 percent of workers in an occupation had to have a given level of education for it to be considered significant. So, for example, even though almost 17 percent of engineering technicians have a college degree, none of that occupation's projected openings were counted as openings for college graduates.

Another limitation of this study is that it focuses on the number of job openings projected in an occupation. But job openings give only a partial view of the prospects that workers can expect. The number of people who will compete for those openings is also important. For most occupations, however, BLS analysts do not have enough information to analyze the competition for jobs.

Finally, the accuracy of this study is limited by its use of survey data. Surveys are always subject to some error because not every worker is counted and because the information gathered is sometimes incorrect. In addition, the education levels of many occupations could not be de-

terminated with statistical accuracy because the number of workers surveyed was too small. In those cases, analysts substituted the education levels of similar occupations or groups of occupations that had larger numbers of workers.

Even with its assumptions and limitations, however, there is evidence that estimating future job openings using the analysis described here produces accurate results. When existing jobs are separated into educational categories in such a way, the results closely match current numbers.

For more information

This article shows expected job openings in only a few of the occupations available to workers who have a college degree. To compare the expected job openings in every occupation studied, see the 2004-05 *Occupational Projections and Training Data* bulletin, which also explains in detail the methods used in this analysis. The bulletin is available online at www.bls.gov/emp/optd/home.htm and is available for sale by calling the Superintendent of Documents toll-free at 1 (866) 572-1800.

To learn more about the occupations described in this article and in the bulletin, see the 2004-05 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. The *Handbook* describes the job outlook, education and training requirements, and job duties of nearly 270 occupations and is available in many libraries and career centers and online at www.bls.gov/oco.

BLS is not the only organization that gathers data on the demand and earnings for college graduates. Associations, both professional ones for specific occupations and general ones like the National Association of Colleges and Employers, often do surveys on employers' hiring needs, workers' education levels, and workers' earnings. Find contact information for these associations in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* or at your local library.

If you are considering college, the U.S. Department of Education provides additional information and assistance, including information about financial aid. Most college students receive some form of financial aid through programs administered by the Department of Education. The Department provides applications for grants and loans, lists resources for finding scholarships, and maintains a searchable database of colleges and universities by location, available majors, enrollment, and other characteristics. Call the financial aid hotline toll-free at 1 (800) 4FED-AID (433-3243); write the Federal Student Aid Information Center, P.O. Box 84, Washington, DC 20044-0084; or visit online at www.studentaid.ed.gov.

Projections and education statistics are a few of the factors to consider when deciding on a career. Other considerations, including working conditions, personal interests and strengths, and local labor market conditions, are also important. Career centers and labor market information offices can help you explore these matters. Find your local one-stop career center and labor market information office by visiting America's Service Locator online at www.servicelocator.org or by calling the U.S. Department of Labor's toll-free career hotline, 1 (877) US2-JOBS (872-5627).

A job search is about more than job outlook. Choosing an occupation that is projected to have many opportunities can ease your way into employment—but in the end, it takes only one job opening to begin finding career satisfaction.

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