



**Suggestions welcome:**

Do you have an item for the Grab bag?  
Send it to: [ooqinfo@bls.gov](mailto:ooqinfo@bls.gov)

## Minimizing risk: Fire protection engineers

When fire strikes, fire fighters come to the rescue. But long before a fire starts—and often before buildings are even constructed—fire protection engineers analyze ways to save people and places from a blaze.

Fire protection engineers use science and technology to answer questions about how fires burn and how life and property can best be protected. They might use their knowledge to help design buildings that will remain structurally sound during a fire or to design fire alarm, exit, or sprinkler systems.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) does not collect data specifically on fire protection engineers.

Instead, it categorizes these workers under the broad title of health and safety engineers, an occupational group that also includes product safety and industrial health engineers. The Society of Fire Protection Engineers estimates that there are about 6,000 fire protection engineers in the United States.

For career information about this occupation, write to the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 620E, Bethesda, Maryland 20814; call (301) 718-2910; or visit online, [www.careersinfireprotectionengineering.com](http://www.careersinfireprotectionengineering.com).

## Blue hair, body piercings—do employers care?

Most employers agree that job candidates should be well groomed for an interview. However, the particulars of appearance—such as an unusual hairstyle or obvious tattoos—might not matter as much when it comes to making hiring decisions, according to survey results from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

The association’s Job Outlook 2006 survey asked employers the degree to which they would be influenced by certain aspects of a candidate’s appearance. As the table shows, survey respondents indicated that some eccentric hairstyles and attire don’t have a strong influence on employers’ decisions.

Jobseekers might want to weigh the risks before opting for self-expression, though. After all, even a slightly negative impression is enough to keep a candidate from getting a job, particularly if employers are choosing among several qualified candidates.

Interviewers’ opinions aside, some organizations have strict policies about the appearance of their employees; a company’s rules might stipulate, for example, that male employees cannot have a beard or mustache. On the other hand, some employers might seek out unconventional candidates and be more accepting of a less traditional appearance.

For more information about the survey, write to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18017; call toll-free, 1 (800) 544-5272, or (610) 868-1421; or visit its Web site, [www.nacweb.org](http://www.nacweb.org).

Influence of candidates’ physical attributes on employers			
	No influence	Slight influence	Strong influence
Grooming	6%	21%	73%
Nontraditional interview attire	13	38	49
Handshake	22	45	33
Body piercing	26	43	31
Obvious tattoos	25	46	29
Nontraditional hair color	26	46	28
Unusual hairstyle	30	49	21
Earring (male)	54	34	12
Beard	73	22	5
Mustache	83	16	1

## Unusual scholarships for unusual scholars

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Do you know someone who loves to skateboard and plans to go to college? That person's promotion of the sport, regardless of skill level, might help him or her to land a \$1,000 or \$5,000 scholarship.

In the realm of scholarship funding, passion for a cause can bring rewards. There are advocacy-related scholarships for everyone from vegetarians to beef enthusiasts. And although some scholarships are based on interest, others are reserved for students who have special qualities. If you're short or tall, for example, you might be eligible for money to help pay for your higher education.

For an online list of, and links to, these and other uncommon scholarships, go to [finaid.org/scholarships/unusual.phtml](http://finaid.org/scholarships/unusual.phtml).

Even if you apply for a scholarship, don't forget to complete a free Federal application for student aid. Apply online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). For more information, write to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, D.C. 20202. Or call toll-free, 1 (800) 4-FED-AID (433-3243), or (202) 401-2000.



## Employment information from the States

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You might want to work in the State where you now live. Maybe you're hoping to relocate instead. As long as you're considering the U.S. job market, you'll want to know what's going on in the State in which you'll seek work.

Even though BLS provides employment projections for the Nation as a whole, projections at the State level can help jobseekers pinpoint what's happening where they might choose to work. Every State creates employment projections, usually with the help of national estimates. Job growth varies from one region to another,

depending on local factors and trends. Some States provide projections for smaller geographic areas, too.

State projections differ from national ones in another way. Although BLS projections are released on a regular

biennial schedule, timetables for the States vary.

Details about State projections are available from the States' labor market information offices. You can find mailing addresses and telephone numbers for these offices in the blue pages of the telephone book. Links to projections are also available online at [www.projectionscentral.com](http://www.projectionscentral.com).



## Beyond content: Tailoring resumes to job type

Employers seek job candidates who have specific qualities. That's why resumes should be tailored to showcase a jobseeker's skills. But sometimes, tailoring the resume format is required as well.

A resume for construction occupations, for example, should reflect the applicant's precision and competency, quantifying accomplishments (such as saving a client thousands of dollars) whenever possible. In applying for Federal Government jobs, jobseekers need to emphasize how their knowledge, skills, and abilities—KSA's—match those sought for the advertised position. And a curriculum vitae, or CV, is frequently required by employers abroad. (For more on CVs, see "Working abroad: Finding international internships and entry-level jobs," by Jill N. Lacey, elsewhere in this issue of the *Quarterly*.)

Check your local public library or your school's career counseling office for books and advice on how to write the best resume for your career type. If possible, talk to people who are already working in your desired occupation or place of employment to find out how they organized their resumes.

Finally, don't forget about past issues of the *Quarterly*; relevant articles include Olivia Crosby's "Resumes, applications, and cover letters" (online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/1999/summer/art01.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/1999/summer/art01.pdf)) and "How to get a job in the Federal Government" (online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2004/summer/art01.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2004/summer/art01.pdf)) and Elka Jones' "Getting back to work: Returning to the labor force after an absence" (online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2004/winter/art03.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2004/winter/art03.pdf)).

## Stay in school, stay out of poverty

In this issue of the *Quarterly*, both "Job outlook by education" articles and the OOCart use data to illustrate that completing more education leads to higher earnings. Other data build on that theme by showing that people with higher levels of education are less likely to be among the working poor.

The chart shows that the risk of being poor generally falls as individuals attain more education. Of those in the labor force for most of 2004, for example, more than 15 percent of people who did not have a high school diploma were among the working poor, compared with less than 2 percent of people who had a bachelor's or higher degree. Educational attainment is linked to earnings potential because high-paying occupations—such as management, professional, and related occupations—are more

likely to be available to those who have higher levels of education.

These data were collected in the 2005 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. For more information, see "A Profile of the Working Poor, 2004," Report 994. For a copy of the report, write to BLS, Division of Labor Force Statistics, 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE., Room 4675, Washington, D.C. 20212; call (202) 691-6378; or download it from [www.bls.gov/cps/cpswp2004.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswp2004.pdf).

**Poverty rate for people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more by highest level of educational attainment, 2004**

