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## Gaming Services Occupations

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### Significant Points

- Job opportunities are available nationwide and are no longer limited to Nevada and New Jersey.
- Workers need a license issued by a regulatory agency, such as a State casino control board or commission.
- Employment is projected to grow much faster than average.
- Job prospects will be best for those with a degree or certification in gaming or a hospitality-related field, previous training or experience in casino gaming, and strong interpersonal and customer service skills.

### Nature of the Work

Legalized gambling in the United States today includes casino gaming, State lotteries, pari-mutuel wagering on contests such as horse or dog racing, and charitable gaming. Gaming, the playing of games of chance, is a multibillion-dollar industry that is responsible for the creation of a number of unique service occupations.

The majority of all gaming services workers are employed in casinos. Their duties and titles may vary from one establishment to another. Some positions are associated with oversight and direction—supervision, surveillance, and investigation—while others involve working with the games or patrons themselves by tending slot machines, dealing cards or running games, handling money, writing and running tickets, and other activities. In nearly any gaming job, workers interact directly with patrons, and part of their responsibility is to make those interactions enjoyable.

Like nearly every business establishment, casinos have workers who direct and oversee day-to-day operations. *Gaming supervisors* and *gaming managers* oversee the gaming operations and personnel in an assigned area. They circulate among the tables and observe the operations to ensure that all of the stations and games are covered for each shift and workers and gamblers adhere to the rules of the games. Gaming supervisors and gaming managers often explain and interpret the operating rules of the house to patrons who may have difficulty understanding the rules. They also may plan and organize activities to create a friendly atmosphere for the guests staying in casino hotels. Periodically, they address complaints about service.

Gaming managers also have additional responsibilities beyond those of supervisors. For example, gaming managers prepare work schedules and station assignments for their subordinates. They are responsible for interviewing, hiring, training, and evaluating new workers.

Managers supervise a variety of other workers. Some of these workers need specialized skills—dealing blackjack, for example—that are unique to casino work. Others require skills common to most business workers, such as the ability to conduct financial transactions.

*Slot key persons* coordinate and supervise the slot machine department and its workers. Their duties include verifying and handling payoff winnings to patrons, resetting slot machines after completing the payoff, and refilling machines with money. Slot key persons must be familiar with a variety of slot machines and be able to make minor repairs and adjustments to the machines as needed. If major repairs are required, slot key persons determine whether the slot machine should be removed from the floor. Working the floor as frontline personnel, they enforce safety rules and report hazards.

*Gaming and sportsbook writers* and runners assist in the operations of games such as bingo and keno, in addition to taking bets on sporting events. They scan tickets presented by patrons and calculate and distribute winnings. Some writers and runners operate the equipment that randomly selects the numbers. Others may announce numbers selected, pick up tickets from patrons, collect bets, or receive, verify, and record patrons' cash wagers.

*Gaming dealers* operate table games such as craps, blackjack, and roulette. Standing or sitting behind the table, dealers provide dice, dispense cards to players, or run the equipment. Some dealers also monitor the patrons for infractions of casino rules. Gaming dealers must be skilled in customer service and in executing their game. Dealers determine winners, calculate and pay winning bets, and collect losing bets. Because of the fast-paced work environment, most gaming dealers are competent in at least two games, usually blackjack and craps.

**Work environment.** Most casinos are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer 3 staggered shifts. Employees can be expected to work weekends and holidays. The atmosphere in casinos is generally filled with fun and often considered glamorous. However, casino work can also be physically demanding. Most occupations require that workers stand for long periods; some require the lifting of heavy items. The atmosphere in casinos exposes workers to certain hazards, such as cigarette, cigar, and pipe smoke. Noise from slot machines, gaming tables, and talking workers and patrons may be distracting to some, although workers wear protective headgear in areas where loud machinery is used to count money.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Each casino establishes its own education, training, and experience requirements, but all gaming service workers must obtain a license from a regulatory agency, such as a State casino control board or commission.

**Education and training.** There usually are no minimum educational requirements for entry-level gaming jobs, although most employers prefer workers with at least a high school diploma or GED.

Each casino establishes its own requirements for education, training, and experience. Some of the major casinos and slot manufacturers run their own training schools, and almost all provide some form of in-house training in addition to requiring certification. The type and quantity of classes needed may vary. Many institutions of higher learning give training toward certificates in gaming, as well as offering an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree in a hospitality-related field such as hospitality management, hospitality adminis-

tration, or hotel management. Some schools offer training in games, gaming supervision, slot attendant and slot repair technician work, slot department management, and surveillance and security.

Slot key persons do not need to meet formal educational requirements to enter the occupation, but completion of slot attendant or slot technician training is helpful. As with most other gaming workers, slot key persons receive on-the-job training during the first several weeks of employment.

Gaming and sports book writers and runners must have at least a high school diploma or GED. Most of these workers receive on-the-job training. Because gaming and sportsbook writers and runners work closely with patrons, they need excellent customer service skills.

Most gaming dealers acquire their skills by attending a dealer school or vocational and technical school. They teach the rules and procedures of the games as well as State and local laws and regulations. Graduation from one of these schools does not guarantee a job at a casino, however, as most casinos also require prospective dealers to audition for open positions. During the audition, personal qualities are assessed along with knowledge of the games.

For most gaming supervisor and gaming manager positions, an associate or bachelor's degree is beneficial, but it is not required. Most employees in these occupations have experience in other gaming occupations, typically as dealers, and have a broad knowledge of casino rules, regulations, procedures, and games.

**Licensure.** Gaming services workers are required to be licensed by a regulatory agency, such as a State casino control board or commission. Applicants for a license must provide photo identification and pay a fee. Some States may require gaming service workers to be residents of that State. Age requirements vary by State. The licensing application process also includes a background investigation and drug test.

**Other qualifications.** In addition to possessing a license, gaming services workers need superior customer service skills. Casino gaming workers provide entertainment and hospitality to patrons, and the quality of their service contributes to an establishment's success or failure. Therefore, gaming workers need good communication skills, an outgoing personality, and the ability to maintain their composure even when dealing with angry or demanding patrons. Personal integrity also is important because workers handle large amounts of money.

Gaming services workers who manage money should have some experience handling cash or using calculators or computers. For such positions, most casinos administer a math test to assess an applicant's level of competency.

Gaming supervisors and gaming managers must have strong leadership, organizational, and communication skills. Excellent customer service and employee relations skills also are necessary.

**Advancement.** Advancement opportunities in casino gaming depend less on workers' previous casino duties and titles than on their ability and eagerness to learn new jobs. For example, an entry-level gaming worker eventually might ad-



*Gaming service workers are required to have a license.*

vance to become a dealer or card room manager or to assume some other supervisory position.

## Employment

Gaming services occupations provided 160,000 jobs in 2006. Gaming services workers are found mainly in the traveler accommodation and gaming industries. Most are employed in commercial casinos, including riverboat casinos, casino hotels, and pari-mutuel racetracks—known as “racinos”—that in 20 States offer casino games. The largest number work in casinos in Nevada. Mississippi, which boasts the greatest number of riverboat casinos in operation, employs the most workers in that venue. In addition, there are 28 States with Indian casinos. Legal lotteries are held in 41 States and the District of Columbia, and pari-mutuel wagering is legal in 43 States. Forty-seven States and the District of Columbia also allow charitable gaming. Other States are considering legislation to permit gambling, but no casinos have been opened as of yet.

For most workers, gaming licensure requires proof of residency in the State in which gaming workers are employed. But some gaming services workers do not limit themselves to one State or even one country, finding jobs on the small number of casinos located on luxury cruise liners that travel the world. These individuals live and work aboard the vessel.

## Job Outlook

Employment of gaming service workers is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations. Opportunities will be best for those with previous casino gaming experience, a degree or technical or vocational training in gaming or a hospitality-related field, and strong customer service skills.

**Employment change.** With demand for gaming showing no sign of waning, employment in gaming services occupations is projected to grow by 23 percent between 2006 and 2016, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. The increasing popularity and prevalence of Indian casinos and racinos will provide substantial new job openings. With many States benefiting from casino gambling in

## Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

| Occupational Title                                      | SOC Code | Employment, 2006 | Projected employment, 2016 | Change, 2006-16 |         |
|---|----------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|
|   |          |                  |                            | Number          | Percent |
| Gaming services occupations.....                        | —        | 160,000          | 214,000                    | 40,000          | 23      |
| Gaming managers .....                                   | 11-9071  | 4,000            | 5,000                      | 1,000           | 24      |
| First-line supervisors/managers of gaming workers ..... | 39-1010  | 54,000           | 64,000                     | 10,000          | 19      |
| Gaming supervisors .....                                | 39-1011  | 34,000           | 42,000                     | 7,900           | 23      |
| Slot key persons .....                                  | 39-1012  | 20,000           | 22,000                     | 2,200           | 11      |
| Gaming dealers .....                                    | 39-3011  | 84,000           | 104,000                    | 20,000          | 24      |
| Gaming and sports book writers and runners .....        | 39-3012  | 18,000           | 24,000                     | 5,200           | 28      |

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

the form of tax revenue or agreements with Indian tribes, additional States are reconsidering their opposition to legalized gambling and will likely approve the construction of more casinos and other gaming establishments during the next decade. Additional job growth will occur in established gaming areas in Nevada and Atlantic City, New Jersey, as they solidify their positions as tourist destinations.

The increase in gaming reflects growth in the population and in its disposable income, both of which are expected to continue. Higher expectations for customer service among gaming patrons also should result in more jobs for gaming services workers. Because of increasing demand in gaming establishments for additional table games, particularly poker, the largest growth is expected among gaming dealers. Conversely, advancements in slot machine technology, such as coinless slot machines—known as “Ticket-in, Ticket-Out machines”—will limit job growth for slot key persons relative to other gaming service occupations. Ticket-in, Ticket-out technology reduces the need for slot key persons to payout jackpots, fill hoppers, and reset machines. Additionally, slot machines linked to a network allow adjustments to be made from a central computer server rather than from the floor by a slot key person. However, there will still be some new jobs for slot key persons because of the casino industry’s focus on customer service and the rising popularity of racinos and slot machines in States that have recently legalized gambling or are expected to do so in the future.

**Job prospects.** Job prospects in gaming services occupations will be best for those with previous casino gaming experience, a degree or technical or vocational training in gaming or a hospitality-related field, and strong interpersonal and customer service skills.

In addition to job openings arising from employment growth, opportunities will result from the need to replace workers transferring to other occupations or leaving the labor force. Despite this, keen competition for jobs as gaming dealers is expected. There are generally more applicants

than jobs. Experienced dealers who are able to attract new or return business will have the best job prospects.

### Earnings

Wage earnings for gaming services workers vary according to occupation, level of experience, training, location, and size of the gaming establishment. The following were median earnings for various gaming services occupations in May 2006:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Gaming managers .....                            | \$62,820 |
| Gaming supervisors .....                         | 41,160   |
| Slot key persons .....                           | 22,720   |
| Gaming and sports book writers and runners ..... | 18,800   |
| Gaming dealers .....                             | 14,730   |

Gaming dealers generally receive a large portion of their earnings from tokens, which are tips in the form of tokens received from players. Earnings from tokens vary depending on the table games the dealer operates, the personal traits of the dealer, and the pooling policies of the casino.

### Related Occupations

Many other occupations provide hospitality and customer service. Some examples of related occupations are security guards and gaming surveillance officers, sales worker supervisors, cashiers, gaming change persons and booth cashiers, retail salespersons, gaming cage workers, and tellers.

### Sources of Additional Information

For additional information on careers in gaming, visit your public library and your State gaming regulatory agency or casino control commission.

Information on careers in gaming also is available from:

► American Gaming Association, 1299 Pennsylvania Ave. NW., Suite 1175, Washington, DC 20004.

Internet: <http://www.americangaming.org>