

Physician Assistants. This is the second fastest growing profession in Idaho among all occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher. Physician assistants held 180 jobs in 2002; that number is projected to grow to 301 in 2012, a 67 percent increase. Demand will be strong for P.A.s, particularly in places that have difficulty attracting physicians, such as rural areas and inner city clinics. In addition, physicians and institutions are expected to employ more P.A.s to provide primary care and assist with medical and surgical procedures. Nationally, the number of physician assistants is expected to grow by 49 percent: over 4,000 new physician assistants will be needed each year. Median annual earnings of physician assistants in Idaho were \$65,010 in 2004; the top 10 percent earned \$92,600 and up (nationally, that figure was \$94,840).

Physical Therapists. This is also one of the fastest growing professions among all occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher in Idaho. Physical therapists held 615 jobs in 2002, a number that will climb 53 percent to 940 in 2012. Thanks to a rapidly growing elderly population that's particularly vulnerable to chronic conditions requiring therapeutic services — as well as to the use of physical therapists at the workplace, to evaluate worksites, develop exercise programs, and teach safe work habits to employees — the demand for P.T.s will be strong throughout the 2002-12 decade. Nationally, the number of physical therapists is expected to grow by 36 percent. In Idaho, median annual earnings of physical therapists were \$55,170 in 2004; the top 10 percent earned \$83,740 and up (nationally, that number was \$89,830).

Teachers. When it comes to the number of new hires, teaching is one of the top professions among occupations requiring a bachelor's. Primary and secondary teachers held 18,715 jobs in 2002 in Idaho; that number will grow to 21,958 by 2012, a 17 percent increase. In the decade leading up to 2012, Idaho will also have to find some 2,060 postsecondary teachers to fill new and replacement positions at its colleges and universities. Nationally, the demand for teachers will vary, ranging from 38 percent for postsecondary teachers down to 9 percent for middle school teachers. Median annual earnings ranged from \$43,200 for the state's primary teachers to \$42,920 for secondary in 2004; the top 10 percent earned \$55,600 and \$53,770 and up, respectively (nationally, those figures were \$68,930 and \$72,110).

Veterinarians. Veterinarians will see a 36 percent growth rate in the decade leading up to 2012. They held 397 jobs in 2002 in Idaho; that number will grow to 541 by 2012. Demand for vets will be

strong across the country (the nation will see a 26 percent increase in hires), especially as older vets retire and as the household pet population increases. Median annual earnings of veterinarians were \$53,040 in 2004; the top 10 percent earned more than \$93,060 (nationally, that figure was \$120,150).

The Regional Outlook

Seven of the top 10 states in terms of projected job growth are in the West: Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and California. In the 15 WICHE states, an additional 5.9 million jobs will be added in the decade leading up to 2010. While California has the greatest numerical growth in the region, with some 270,000 new jobs being created each year, the states seeing the fastest job growth are Nevada (41 percent), Utah (31 percent), Idaho (24 percent), and Arizona and Colorado (23 percent). Most of the region's fastest growing professions are in the health and computer sectors.

Sources: Workforce Report Data

All information used in the text and tables of this report is available from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor (<http://lmi.idaho.gov>) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/emp).

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Visit our website at www.wiche.edu.

All of the top jobs listed on Table 1 require considerable education and training. Some of them (respiratory therapy technician, respiratory therapist, registered nurse, radiation therapist, radiologic technologist) require an associate's degree, while all the rest demand a bachelor's degree or higher.

Strikingly, 11 of the state's 12 top jobs are related to healthcare. Almost 12,000 new jobs will be created in a variety of health fields, from dentistry to vet med, as well as in related technical occupations. The demand for registered nurses — one of the state's top jobs — will see a 48 percent increase: almost 7,000 R.N.s will need to be hired for new posts and to replace those who leave the field. And Idaho will see strong competition for those nurses: the top five states needing the largest numbers of nurses are all in the West. Physician assistants will see a 67 percent increase in their ranks, with 150 being hired for new and replacement positions. Pharmacists will log growth of 51 percent, while physical therapists will experience a 53 percent increase. Idaho will also experience a strong demand for new doctors, and occupational therapists. One reason for the increase: the aging of the state's population. Between 2000 and 2004, the state's over-65 population increased by 9 percent, to nearly 160,000.

Idaho will see strong growth in a variety of sectors in the decade leading up to 2012. One of the state's top jobs is in the computer field: computer software engineer. Overall, the state is projected to add close

to 4,000 new jobs in this and other technical fields.

Two other essential professionals, managers and teachers, will also see a large number of hires in the decade leading up to 2012, due to new job creation and the need for replacement workers. Some 1,800 positions will have to be filled each year for managers of all types — from CEOs and operations managers to supervisors. Large numbers of teachers at every level from kindergarten through college will be needed. The number of primary teachers will rise by 16 and the number of secondary teachers by 19 percent. More than 2,000 new slots in postsecondary education are projected to open up during the decade. In all, over 1,600 hires will have to be made each year to cover all of education's new job openings and retirements.

As Idaho's economy changes, so do the kinds of jobs available to Idahoans. The projections indicate that plenty of jobs will be available for those without formal training beyond high school. However, wages in the sectors hiring those workers — retail sales and food service will be top employers — fall significantly below the statewide mean (\$33,530 a year), and many positions don't provide even a living wage. Over the next several years, workers who have the most education and training will have the best opportunity for high-paying jobs in growing sectors. In addition, a number of professions requiring education beyond the bachelor's degree are expected to see moderate to strong growth (see Table 2).

Table 2
Idaho Professional Employment Projections, 2002-2012

Profession	Number		% Change	Total Openings*
	2002	2012		
All professions**	610,640	755,160	24%	291,100
Architects	651	834	28%	260
Dentists	708	808	14%	220
Librarians	300	358	19%	130
Occupational Therapists	409	639	56%	290
Optometrists	156	206	32%	90
Pharmacists	1,120	1,690	51%	790
Physical Therapists	615	940	53%	390
Physician Assistants	180	301	67%	150
Physicians and Surgeons	1,451	1,976	36%	720
Registered Nurses	9,894	14,629	48%	6,810
Veterinarians	397	541	36%	240

* Includes new jobs and replacements, rounded.

Source: Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor.

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