

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

At a Glance: Jobs, Workers & the Economy

AUGUST 2012 | FOCUS: KING COUNTY

Occupational Employment by Wage Level in King County

This edition of *Beyond the Headlines* explores how major occupational groups fared in King County during the Great Recession and how they are projected to grow over the long term. In addition, it illustrates how different wage categories of these occupational groups compare to one another in terms of growth. It does so by categorizing each major occupational group as **low-wage** (less than \$15 per hour), **middle-wage** (\$15 – \$25 per hour), or **high-wage** (more than \$25 per hour).ⁱ

To begin, the table belowⁱⁱ illustrates employment numbers and growth rates of major occupational groups in King County (pre- to post-Recession, 2008 – 2010, and long-term projections, 2010 – 2020), as well as their current median wages.

King County Occupational Employment and Median Wages: 2008, 2010, 2020

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	Est. Emp. 2008	Est. Emp. 2010	Jobs Added/Lost Recession	% Job Growth/Loss Recession	Est. Emp. 2020	Jobs Added 2010-20	% Job Growth 2010-20	2012 Median Wage	Wage Level
Total, All Occupations	1,315,909	1,242,330	-73,579	-5.6%	1,438,382	196,052	13.6%	22.23	Mid
Management Occupations	72,531	82,246	9,751	13.4%	95,311	13,065	15.9%	54.19	High
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	79,918	84,794	4,867	6.1%	99,868	15,074	17.8%	33.93	High
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	87,889	90,656	2,767	3.1%	116,800	26,144	28.8%	43.93	High
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	40,108	33,822	-6,286	-15.7%	40,070	6,248	18.5%	40.10	High

i. Using King County median wage in 2012.

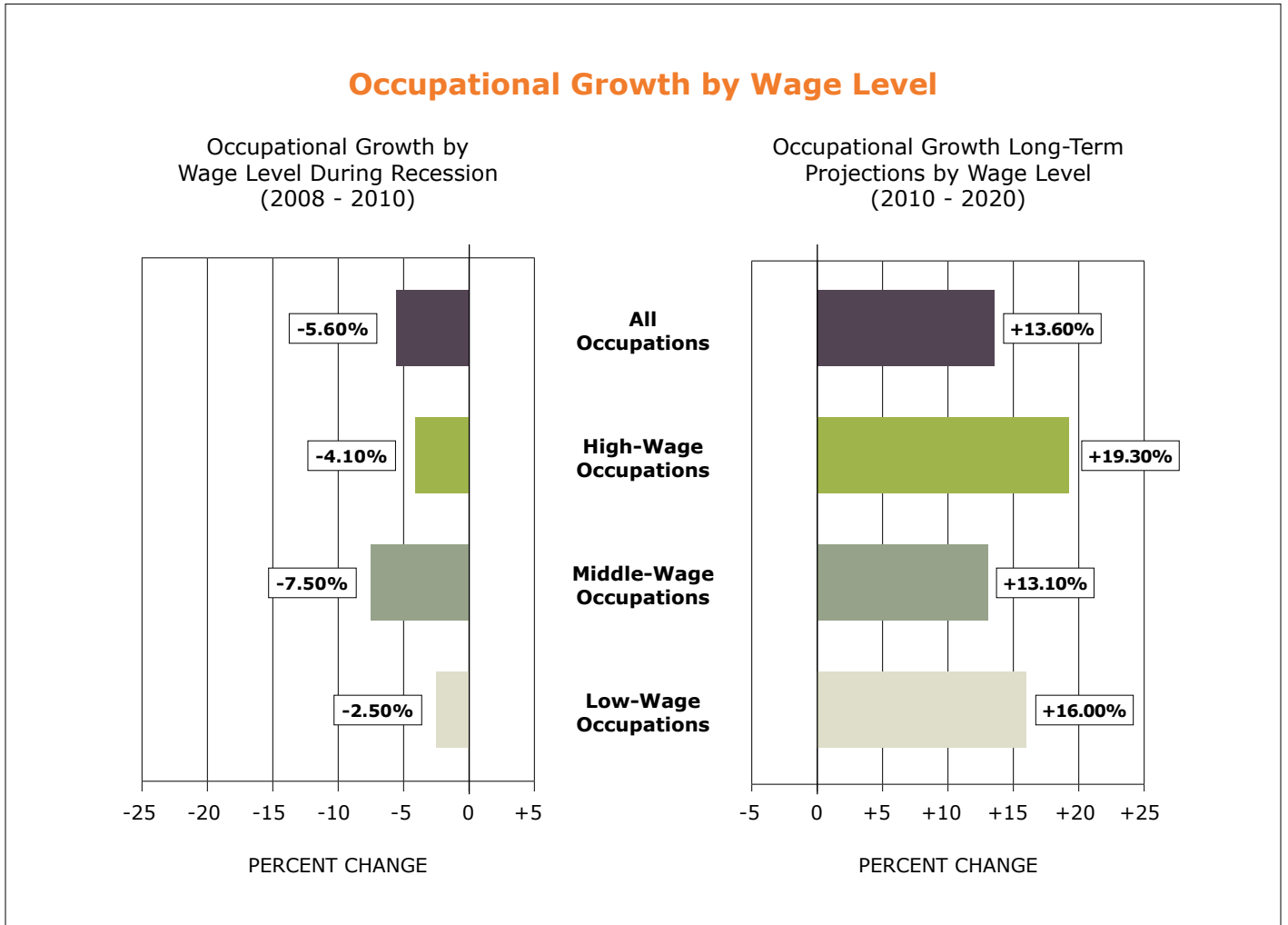
ii. Data for this table and the ensuing charts provided by the Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch (May 2012). Note that one Major Occupational Group – Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations – is excluded from this table and the ensuing charts as it has very limited employment.

King County Occupational Employment and Median Wages: 2008, 2010, 2020, *cont'd*

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	Est. Emp. 2008	Est. Emp. 2010	Jobs Added/Lost Recession	% Job Growth/ Loss Recession	Est. Emp. 2020	Jobs Added 2010-20	% Job Growth 2010-20	2012 Median Wage	Wage Level
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	24,233	17,427	-6,806	-28.1%	20,932	3,505	20.1%	30.36	High
Community and Social Services Occupations	17,587	17,118	-469	-2.7%	19,901	2,783	16.3%	21.06	Mid
Legal Occupations	13,710	14,376	666	4.9%	16,376	2,000	13.9%	36.64	High
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	61,290	63,080	1,790	2.9%	70,865	7,785	12.3%	23.85	Mid
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	34,658	35,168	510	1.5%	41,743	6,575	18.7%	24.50	Mid
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	55,037	55,549	512	0.9%	68,363	12,814	23.1%	35.59	High
Healthcare Support Occupations	26,196	27,936	1,740	6.6%	34,194	6,258	22.4%	15.97	Mid
Protective Service Occupations	20,154	19,458	-696	-3.5%	21,160	1,702	8.7%	25.71	High
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	95,616	88,809	-6,807	-7.1%	101,233	12,424	14.0%	11.47	Low
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	41,162	43,383	2,221	5.4%	51,454	8,071	18.6%	14.05	Low
Personal Care and Service Occupations	51,900	51,686	-214	-0.4%	60,650	8,964	17.3%	12.03	Low
Sales and Related Occupations	140,328	129,935	-10,393	-7.4%	143,084	13,149	10.1%	15.99	Mid
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	198,190	169,433	-28,757	-14.5%	191,817	22,384	13.2%	18.23	Mid
Construction and Extraction Occupations	72,985	49,206	-23,779	-32.6%	55,030	5,824	11.8%	26.39	High
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	41,483	42,797	1,314	3.2%	46,337	3,540	8.3%	24.22	Mid
Production Occupations	59,118	52,761	-6,357	-10.8%	60,465	7,704	14.6%	19.55	Mid
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	81,816	72,690	-9,126	-11.2%	82,729	10,039	13.8%	17.48	Mid

The two bar charts on the following page compare the King County growth rates – both actual rates during the Recession and projected rates from 2010 – 2020 – of low-wage, middle-wage and high-wage occupational groups. Together, they show the following:

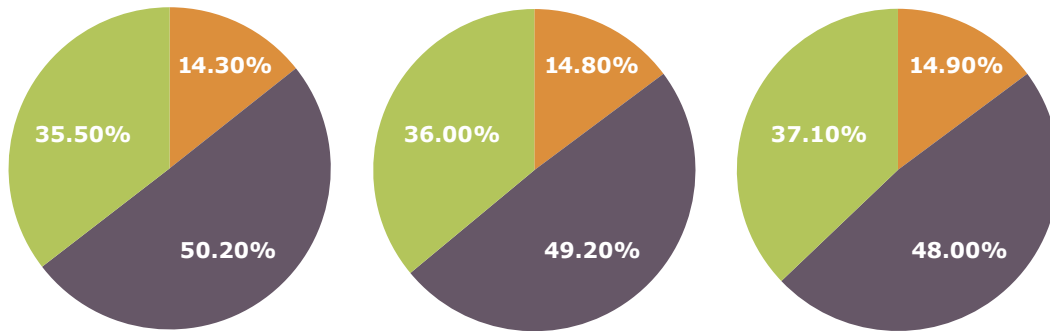
- **Low-wage** occupational groups were the least impacted by the Recession, and will see above average growth over the long term;
- **Middle-wage** occupational groups were not only hardest hit by the Recession, but are also expected to grow the least over the long term;
- **High-wage** occupational groups were impacted by the Recession to a below-average extent, and are expected to have the fastest rate of growth over the long term.



Finally, the pie charts on the following page illustrate the composition of all occupations in King County in terms of low-wage, middle-wage and high-wage occupational groups. They show how this composition has changed from pre-Recession to post-Recession, and how it is projected to change by 2020. Middle-wage occupations show the greatest decrease – and high-wage occupations the greatest increase – in terms of share of total employment during these two timeframes and overall.

Composition of All King County Occupations by Wage Level

■ High-Wage
 ■ Middle-Wage
 ■ Low-Wage



**2008
Pre-Recession**

**2010
Post-Recession**

**2020
Long-Term Projection**

TOTAL OCCUPATIONS: 1,315,909		
High-Wage	466,565	35.50%
Middle-Wage	660,666	50.20%
Low-Wage	188,678	14.30%

TOTAL OCCUPATIONS: 1,242,330		
High-Wage	447,534	36.00%
Middle-Wage	610,918	49.20%
Low-Wage	183,878	14.80%

TOTAL OCCUPATIONS: 1,438,382		
High-Wage	533,910	37.10%
Middle-Wage	691,135	48.00%
Low-Wage	213,337	14.90%

While middle-wage jobs are expected to lose ground as a share of total employment in King County by 2020, it is important to note that they will remain the largest category of occupations in the area – still comprising almost half of all jobs. This is critical as these jobs not only provide opportunities for people to earn a living wage, but they often require less than a B.A. (though typically some postsecondary education) and are thus more accessible to low-skill residents who secure some additional education and training.

BEYOND THE HEADLINES: Policy & Labor Market Updates for Those Working to Help Low-Income and Low-Skill Individuals Advance through Education, Training & Living-Wage Jobs

About Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle Jobs Initiative creates opportunities for students, workers and business to succeed by helping education and job training programs meet the demands of a new economy. We find and apply solutions for people to gain the skills they need for good jobs that create prosperity for all in today’s marketplace.

Supported by the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

Contact Information

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