

# Job Trends Report

AUGUST 2011



## Industry Focus – PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES

An industry of interest that has seen much of the ebbs and flows associated with the Great Recession and subsequent recovery is Professional & Business Services. This industry has been hit hard, with many businesses failing to thrive or survive in the wake of this economic downturn. On the bright side, a strong recovery will depend on Professional & Business Services jobs to support new and growing economic development.

The Professional & Business Services industry consists of a wide range of technical and professional services sold mainly to other businesses<sup>1</sup>. This industry consists of these sectors:

- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** comprises establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized

<sup>1</sup> Paul Sommers, Ph.D, Mark Gardner, and Juliet Scarpa. March 2008. "Skills Required: Preparing Puget Sound for Tomorrow's Middle Wage Jobs" Seattle Jobs Initiative.

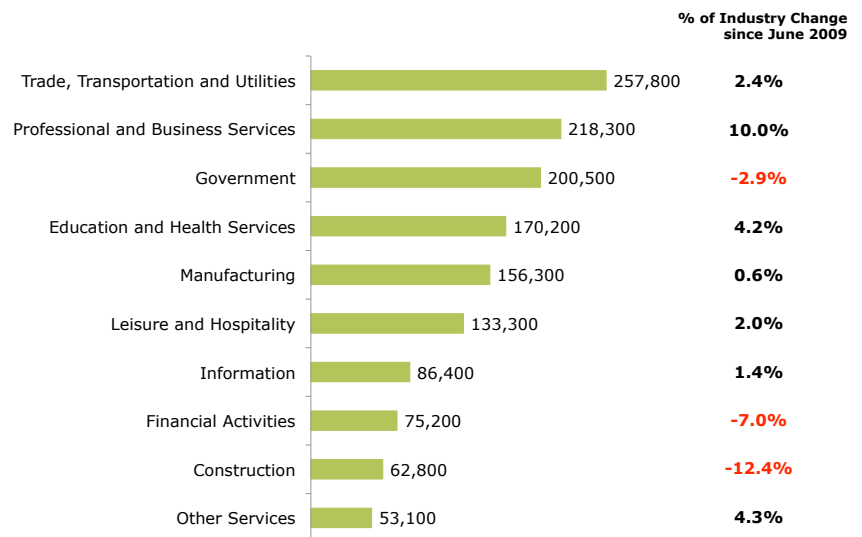
### TREND TRACKER: What's going on in the local labor market?

While some industries seem to have weathered the storm successfully, others continue to feel the impacts of slow housing starts, weak consumer confidence, and an uncertain economic future overall. These industries continue to fare poorly, losing jobs and maintaining high levels of unemployment. As Chart 1 shows, Construction has seen the hardest hits - 12% lost in its overall employment since the end of the recession. Industries like healthcare continue to add jobs.

#### CHART 1

#### JUNE 2011 – Employment by Industry – Seattle MSA

Since the marked end of the recession -- June 2009 -- Seattle area employment has increased by 17,000 jobs.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department -- estimates are seasonally adjusted. Not shown: Mining and Logging.

As Chart 2 illustrates on the following page, high rates of unemployment continue to plague the region and nation. During the recession, the unemployment rate climbed to more than 9% for Washington State and over 8% for Seattle. These rates have remained high since the

design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; translation and interpretation services; veterinary services; and other professional, scientific, and technical services<sup>2</sup>.

- **Management of Companies and Enterprises** comprises (1) establishments that hold the securities of (or other equity interests in) companies and enterprises for the purpose of owning a controlling interest or influencing management decisions or (2) establishments (except government establishments) that administer, oversee, and manage establishments of the company or enterprise and that normally undertake the strategic or organizational planning and decision making role of the company or enterprise. Establishments that administer, oversee, and manage may hold the securities of the company or enterprise<sup>3</sup>.

- **Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services** comprises establishments performing routine support activities for the day-to-day operations of other organizations. Activities performed include: office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, document preparation and similar clerical services, solicitation, collection, security and surveillance services, cleaning, and waste disposal services<sup>4</sup>.

2 <http://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag54.htm>  
 3 <http://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag55.htm>  
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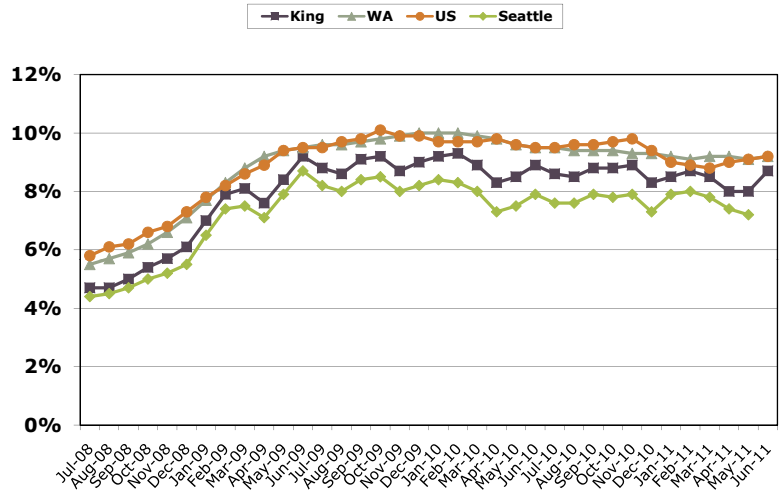
## TREND TRACKER, *cont'd*

end of the recession, and are not expected to return to pre-recession levels for several years.

### CHART 2

#### Unemployment Rate – July 2008 to June 2011

Unemployment rates remain high nationally and locally. Seattle and King County have seen increases and recent decreases through the first half of 2011.



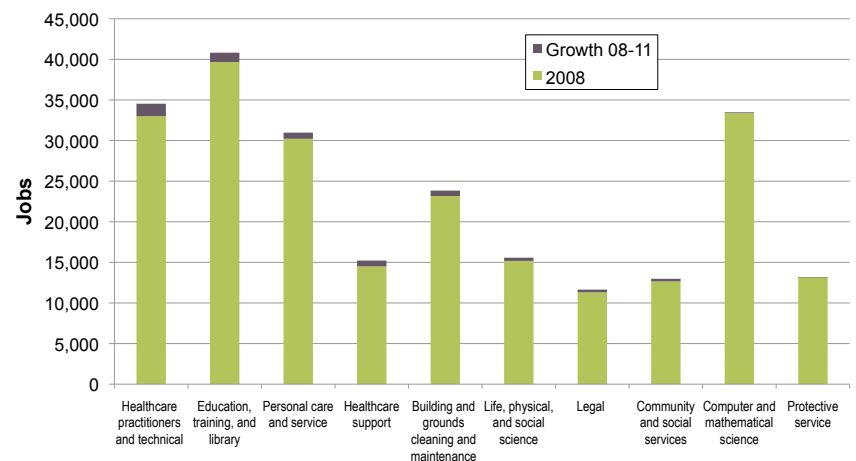
Source: Washington State Employment Security Department; Bureau of Labor Statistics -- Seattle estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

Chart 3 provides more detailed information about how specific occupational categories have performed over the last three years for Seattle. Most notably, between 2008 and 2011, Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations have added over 1,500 positions. Conversely, not shown in this chart are the over 8,000 construction jobs lost for Seattle over the same timeframe.

### CHART 3

#### Seattle Top Growth Occupational Categories 2008-2011

Occupations in Education and Health Services have added the most jobs in Seattle since 2008.



Source: EMSI

## SEATTLE JOBS INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT: Medical Business Information Technology

Two occupations – **Medical Secretaries** and **Medical Records and Health Information Technicians** – are closely associated with the subsector Medical Business Information Technology. These positions support the functions of the healthcare field through a variety of administrative duties. The important foundational hard and soft skills needed to successfully obtain these positions are currently being provided to Seattle residents through Seattle Jobs Initiative's Medical Business Information Technology (MBIT) training in partnership with South Seattle Community College (SSCC).

Recognizing the relative strength of the Healthcare field both during and since the recession, Seattle Jobs Initiative has capitalized on its success with training in office occupations and SSCC's existing Medical Office clerk certificate program, modifying curriculum based on employer and industry input to incorporate the skills required to support a variety of administrative areas in the field.

Seattle Jobs Initiative's MBIT program is a full-time training, held from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Individuals participate in training at South Seattle Community College for two quarters, earning 56 credits in 24 weeks, and spend a third quarter in a full-time internship in the field. Minimum requirements for participation in the training include passing a criminal background check, CASAS scores of 220 in both reading and math, familiarity with computers and some exposure to Microsoft Word, and the ability to type 25 words per minute.

The first quarter of training focuses on the foundational skills necessary in the field, including Business English, Keyboarding, Performance Skills, and Microsoft Office. The second quarter continues in more depth with Performance Skills and Microsoft Office programs, and also provides additional training in medical terminology as well as some medical administrative support-specific billing software. In the third quarter, in addition to completing an internship in a medical office, students continue with coursework focused on job search and interviewing skills.

The MBIT program's 56 credits articulate with SSCC's Medical Office Clerk 1-year certificate, as well as with the 2-year Business Information Technology program with a Medical Office focus. The value of this program lies not only in the skills provided, but the compression of these key program elements for individuals to complete and connect with other programs faster than through other training avenues. Further, this program provides such a broad swath of skills and experience so that individuals can both find needed employment with additional training in occupations that exist along a strong career pathway in both clinical and administrative occupations in the healthcare field, leading to positions such as Medical Assisting, Healthcare Coordinators and Healthcare Office Managers.

# Occupations

The variety of industries included in this cluster makes for a complex group of occupations. Occupations in the Professional & Business Services sector are relatively diverse, including those office-related occupations relying on computer skills as well as managerial and supervisory roles. Unlike other industry sectors, such as Healthcare and Construction where many of the jobs in occupations most associated with that cluster are also located in the cluster, thousands of business and professional jobs exist in other industry clusters, greatly expanding the job base of these occupations.

The following list consists of 46 different occupations associated with Professional & Business Services sector. Many of these occupations are not exclusive to the industry, but rather support a variety of industries in their business development and management.

- **Accountants and auditors**
- **Actuaries**
- **Administrative services managers**
- **Advertising and promotions managers**
- **Bill and account collectors**
- **Billing and posting clerks and machine operators**
- **Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks**
- **Budget analysts**
- **Chief executives**
- **Compensation and benefits managers**
- **Computer and information systems managers**
- **Computer operators**
- **Computer support specialists**
- **Computer systems analysts**
- **Credit analysts**
- **Customer service representatives**
- **Data entry keyers**
- **Database administrators**
- **Desktop publishers**
- **Executive secretaries and administrative assistants**
- **File clerks**
- **Financial analysts**

- **Financial managers**
- **First-line supervisors/managers of office and administrative support workers**
- **General and operations managers**
- **Human resources managers, all other**
- **Legal secretaries**
- **Marketing managers**
- **Medical records and health information technicians**
- **Medical secretaries**
- **Meeting and convention planners**
- **Network and computer systems administrators**
- **Network systems and data communications analysts**
- **New accounts clerks**
- **Office clerks, general**
- **Payroll and timekeeping clerks**
- **Procurement clerks**
- **Public relations managers**
- **Purchasing managers**
- **Receptionists and information clerks**
- **Sales managers**
- **Secretaries, except legal, medical, and executive**
- **Switchboard operators, including answering service**
- **Telephone operators**
- **Training and development managers**
- **Word processors and typists**

Collectively, the above list comprises almost 115,000 positions in Seattle in 2011. Wages for these occupations range from a median of \$14 per hour for Data Entry Keyers and Receptionists and Information Clerks up to almost \$60 per hour for Computer and Information System Managers.

Table 1 (on the following two pages) details how these occupations fall out by wage based on educational attainment requirements. While many positions require a 4-year degree or higher, there also exist many opportunities to access a living wage through positions that require some education and training beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree.

Table 1. Professional &amp; Business Service Occupations by Educational Attainment and Wages, Seattle 2011

Occupation by Educational Attainment	2011 Median Wage
<b>BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER, PLUS WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	
Computer and information systems managers	\$59.78
General and operations managers	\$58.77
Marketing managers	\$55.88
Sales managers	\$53.76
Human resources managers, all other	\$52.17
Compensation and benefits managers	\$47.73
Public relations managers	\$47.66
Training and development managers	\$47.25
Financial managers	\$46.05
Chief executives	\$45.20
Administrative services managers	\$43.59
Purchasing managers	\$43.58
Actuaries	\$41.32
Advertising and promotions managers	\$36.04
<b>BACHELOR'S DEGREE</b>	
Database Administrators	\$39.97
Network and computer systems administrators	\$38.59
Computer systems analysts	\$38.18
Network systems and data communications analysts	\$36.61
Budget analysts	\$33.14
Credit analysts	\$31.94
Accountants and auditors	\$27.05
Financial analysts	\$26.21
Meeting and convention planners	\$18.99
<b>ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE</b>	
Computer support specialists	\$24.21
Medical records and health information technicians	\$18.19
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE IN A RELATED OCCUPATION</b>	
First-line supervisors/managers of office and administrative support workers	\$25.75
New accounts clerks	\$18.70
<b>POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL AWARD</b>	
Legal secretaries	\$25.21
Medical secretaries	\$18.99
Desktop publishers	\$17.90

Table 1. Professional & Business Service Occupations by Educational Attainment and Wages, Seattle 2011, *cont'd*

<b>MODERATE-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)</b>	
Executive secretaries and administrative assistants	\$22.69
Computer operators	\$21.05
Payroll and timekeeping clerks	\$20.86
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	\$18.76
Billing and posting clerks and machine operators	\$18.49
Secretaries, except legal, medical and executive	\$17.94
Word processors and typists	\$17.45
Customer service representatives	\$16.63
Data entry keyers	\$14.16
<b>SHORT-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)</b>	
Procurement clerks	\$19.20
Telephone operators	\$16.87
Bill and account collectors	\$16.75
File clerks	\$15.08
Switchboard operators, including answering service	\$15.06
Office clerks, general	\$14.90
Receptionists and information clerks	\$14.20

Source: EMSI; for category definitions, visit [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_nem\\_definitions.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_nem_definitions.htm)

Collectively, six occupations stand out as strong opportunities for future employment in the Professional & Business Services industry. They represent a sizable number of jobs, and also are projected for large growth and openings from now until 2014. Table 2 provides more detail on these opportunities.

Table 2. Select Professional &amp; Business Services Occupations – Projections, Wage and Educational Attainment, Seattle

OCCUPATION	2011	2014	NEW JOBS	OPENINGS	ANNUAL OPENINGS	MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE	EDUCATION/ TRAINING
Office clerks, general	11,726	12,058	332	818	273	\$14.90	Short-term OJT
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	10,880	11,147	267	667	222	\$18.76	Moderate-term OJT
Accountants and auditors	7,546	7,982	436	829	276	\$27.05	Bachelor's degree
Customer service representatives	6,707	6,981	274	917	306	\$16.63	Moderate-term OJT
Receptionists and information clerks	4,819	5,013	194	585	195	\$14.20	Short-term OJT
Computer systems analysts	4,428	4,636	208	500	167	\$38.18	Bachelor's degree

Source: EMSI; New jobs are added positions, while openings include existing positions that are slated for turnover.

Overall, these occupations require an increasing knowledge of computer and technical skills to serve important functions in the industry. Customer service and administrative service skills are also preferred. Math skills may also serve as valuable assets to the organizations these positions serve. Active listening, reading comprehension, time management, critical thinking, speaking, writing, and some adept problem solving are all skills valued for employment in these occupations.

## Workforce Realities

Despite the harsh impacts inflicted by the recent economic downturn on individuals' abilities to retire at a desirable age, slowing the surge of individuals leaving the workforce, the reality is that many individuals will inevitably age out of the workforce within the next 5 years. In King County 16% of the Professional & Business Services workforce is currently 55 years or older<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, the nature of the work required to support the Professional & Business activities that move economic development and recovery is changing. New skills are being required at all levels of employment to meet the needs of an increasingly complex workplace. Complex thinking, adaptability and problem-solving skills are being required for positions that previously were not. Further, strong technical skills are now requisite for many administrative positions to handle the increasing reliance on various computer and communication technologies.

The challenge remains – to provide a workforce with the necessary skills for tomorrow's occupations today. Individuals

Below are descriptions of the specific roles and duties associated with each of the occupations from Table 2.

### OFFICE CLERK, GENERAL

Perform duties too varied and diverse to be classified in any specific office clerical occupation, requiring knowledge of office systems and procedures. Clerical duties may be assigned in accordance with the office procedures of individual establishments and may include a combination of answering telephones, bookkeeping, typing or word processing, stenography, office machine operation, and filing.

### BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING CLERKS

Compute, classify, and record numerical data to keep financial records complete. Perform any combination of routine calculating, posting, and verifying duties to obtain primary financial data for use in maintaining accounting records. May also check the accuracy of figures, calculations, and postings pertaining to business transactions recorded by other workers.

### ACCOUNTANTS AND AUDITORS

Examine, analyze, and interpret accounting records to prepare financial statements, give advice, or audit and evaluate statements prepared by others. Install or advise on systems of recording costs or other financial and budgetary data.

### CUSTOMER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES

Interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products and services and to handle and resolve complaints. Excludes individuals whose duties are primarily installation, sales, or repair.

### RECEPTIONISTS AND INFORMATION CLERKS

Answer inquiries and provide information to the general public, customers, visitors, and other interested parties regarding activities conducted at establishment and location of departments, offices, and employees within the organization.

### COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYSTS

Analyze science, engineering, business, and all other data processing problems for application to electronic data processing systems. Analyze user requirements, procedures, and problems to automate or improve existing systems and review computer system capabilities, workflow, and scheduling limitations. May analyze or recommend commercially available software.

<sup>5</sup> Calculations on LED data, US Census Bureau -- King County 2010Q2 for NAICS 54, 55, & 56.

must be armed with both the soft skills to manage in a high-paced multifaceted office environment as well as the hard skills required to meet the needs of employment at all levels.

## Professional & Business Services Community College Programs

A variety of opportunities exist locally providing

training in a host of areas to support the Professional & Business Services industry, providing the skills needed for those entry-level positions detailed on the previous page. Options include certificate and degrees from Accounting, Office Administration, Computer Administration, Administrative Office Management, and Executive and Legal Assistant programs.

Table 3 provides a sampling of these programs at six local community colleges.

Table 3. Professional & Business Services Community College Programs

COLLEGE	PATHWAY	CREDENTIAL	CREDITS	NUMBER OF QUARTERS
HIGHLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	ACCOUNTING	Accounting Assistant I	15	1
		Accounting Assistant II	15	1
		Accounting Certificate	47	3
		Bookkeeping Certificate	59	4
		Accounts Receivable / Payable Clerk	69	5
		Accounting AAS	100	6
	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	I-BEST Intro to Business Technology Certificate	15	1
		Administrative Assistant Certificate	47-53 (plus prerequisites)	3-4
		Administrative Management AAS	94-46 (plus prerequisites)	6
NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	ACCOUNTING	Office Assistant I Certificate	12	1
		Office Assistant II Certificate	12	1
		Accounting Achievement Certificate	15	1
		Bookkeeping Certificate	43	3
		Computerized Accounting Technician Certificate	63	4
		Accounting AAS	98	6
	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	Basic Customer Service Certificate	21	2
		Advanced Customer Service Certificate	41	3
		Administrative Specialist Certificate	15	3
		Administrative Assistant Certificate	62	4
Administrative Assistant AAS Degree		92-95	6	
RENTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE	ACCOUNTING	Accounting Clerk Certificate	39	2
		Accounting Paraprofessional Certificate	62	4
		Accounting Paraprofessional AAS	97	6
		Accounting Specialist AAS-T	109	6
	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MANAGEMENT	Administrative Office Management Certificate	74	4
		Administrative Office Management AAS Degree	94	5
		Office Management Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certificate	77	4
		Office Management Entrepreneurship and Small Business AAS Degree	97	5



Table 3. Professional & Business Services Community College Programs, *cont'd*

RENTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE, <i>cont'd</i>	COMPUTER APPLICATIONS	Basic Computer Applications Certificate	13	1
		Computer Applications Certificate	74	4
		Computer Applications AAS Degree	94	5
	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	Office Support Specialist Certificate	73	4
		Executive Assistant AAS Degree	104	5
	LEGAL ASSISTANT	Legal Assistant Certificate	76	4
Legal Assistant AAS Degree		96	5	
SEATTLE CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	Business Information Technology Certificate	60	4
		Business Information Technology AAS Degree	94	6
SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	ACCOUNTING	Accounting Clerk	15	1
		Payroll Clerk	20	2
		Accounts Payable / Receivable Clerk	20	2
		Certificate of Proficiency	55	4
		Accounting AAS	90	6
	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	Technology for Professional Careers Certificate	19	2
		Word Processing Certificate	19	2
		Business Software Applications	19	2
		Office Clerk Certificate	16	1
		Customer Service Specialist	19	1
		Business Information Technology Certificate of Proficiency	47-50	3
		Business Information Technology AAS Degree	90	6
	SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	ACCOUNTING	Certificate of Proficiency	58-60
Accounting AAS			96	6
Accounting AAS-T			102-106	6-7
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION		Business Information Technology Certificate	45-47	3
		Business Information Technology AAS Degree	96-100	6
		Business Information Technology AAS-T Degree	95	6

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