

## Extra News

Posted on 12-23-2008

## Help Wanted

### Employment in a recession

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It's official. The "R" word. The National Bureau of Economic Research has determined that the U.S. is officially in a recession. If you are currently seeking employment, you know that this is not good news as job prospects during a recession are thought to be limited. However, it's important to keep in mind that not all industries and occupations are expected to bear the brunt of a recession as sharply as others.

In September 2008, a study released by the Workforce Alliance and Skills2Compete – Illinois projected one million well-paying middle-skill jobs in the state by the year 2014. Illinois is already beginning to feel the effects of a shortage, as there are not enough qualified individuals to fill these vacant positions.



But what are middle-skill jobs? These jobs require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year college degree; middle-skill positions currently comprise the largest segment of jobs in the economy and are among the community members you see each day. This category includes such occupations as police officers, medical lab technicians, carpenters and mechanics to name just a few. Many middle-skill careers offer median earnings above the Illinois 2006 median of \$31,637.

Despite the current economic climate, the healthcare industry is poised for growth thanks in part to evolving technologies and an aging population. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), almost half of the 30 fastest growing occupations in the country are in the healthcare industry. Middle-skill jobs abound with great starting pay, a tremendous amount of career pathways with additional education and/or training and generous benefits packages.

The environmental sector is also expected to see growth across the country as well as in Illinois. The number of "green collar" jobs is on the rise as we look for ways of combating global warming. Training programs offering vocational education in "green" skills are beginning to pop up around the country as a result. The BLS expects that jobs in the environmental sector will grow by more than 25 percent – much higher than the average growth for other industries.

Yet another growing sector is security, as crime certainly doesn't stop in a recession. Police officer and security guard positions are plentiful according to [MarketWatch.com](http://www.MarketWatch.com). Even if a law enforcement job is lost due to budget cuts, an individual will rebound quickly as the demand is so high.

*NLEI can help you prepare for middle-skill careers from vocational training to employment placement. For more information, call (773) 247-0707 or visit 2011 W. Pershing Road.*