

Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

Focus: Administrative Support June 2004

Understanding the Local Labor Market: Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County is intended as a useful resource for career counselors and other professionals responsible for helping jobseekers make informed decisions about employment and training. Featured occupations are selected on the basis of vacancies, wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

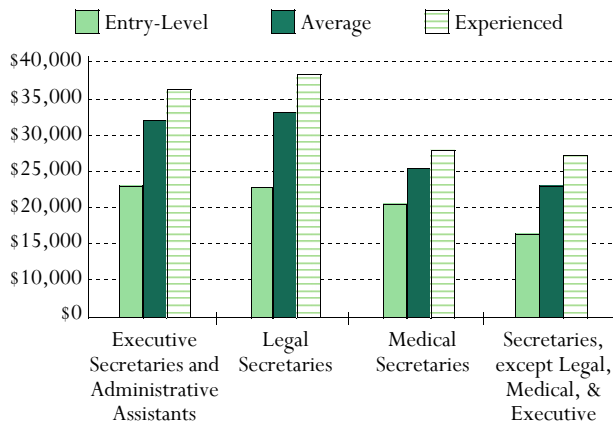
What are administrative support jobs?

- Administrative support is a catchall term that applies to workers responsible for a wide range of administrative and clerical duties needed to keep an organization running smoothly.
- *Administrative assistants* and *secretaries* use personal computers extensively to plan meetings, manage projects, develop and organize office documents, and provide information to staff and clients. Some workers, such as *legal secretaries* and *medical secretaries*, must apply knowledge specific to their industry.
- What is the difference between an *administrative assistant*, a *secretary*, and an *executive secretary*? It depends. Some employers use only one title, while others apply the titles to workers in different ranks. *Executive secretaries* generally have greater responsibilities and higher pay than either of the other two positions.
- *General office clerks* and *receptionists* perform administrative tasks requiring less responsibility and fewer computer skills.

What are wages, benefits, and work conditions in the field?

- Most jobs are full-time with benefits, though temporary agency positions do not offer benefits.
- Work conditions are comfortable, though some people find substantial sitting and use of computers physically stressful.

Administrative Support Wages in Allegheny County

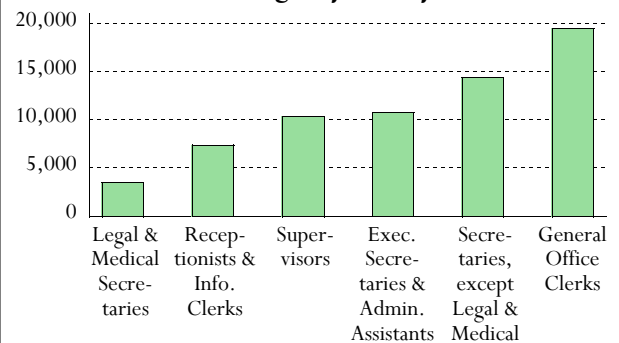


Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (www.dli.state.pa.us/workforceinfo)

How many positions are there?

- The Center for Workforce Information and Analysis estimates there are 67,000 jobs in Allegheny County in the occupations listed below. **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** had more than 3,700 postings for these job titles in 2003.

Administrative Support Employment in Allegheny County



Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (www.dli.state.pa.us/workforceinfo)

- Demand follows hiring trends in the entire economy. At present, this means hiring is down.
- The use of personal computers has changed the field, with workers assuming a wider range of responsibilities.
- This occupation is not expected to grow as fast as some others, but its sheer size, combined with turnover, mean that this will be a strong source of job openings.
- *Administrative support supervisors* are generally hired by promoting administrative support workers from within an organization.

How do I find an administrative support job?

- Administrative support workers are found in many different kinds of businesses and industries, ranging from education and health to government and financial services.
- Temporary agencies offer those new to the field an opportunity to build experience while searching for a permanent position.
- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has many job postings for administrative support workers. To find out more, visit www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us or call 1-866-317-JOBS.

FOCUS: Administrative Support

What skills, training, or credentials do I need?

- Many jobs require only a high school diploma or GED. Work experience, certifications and/or degrees can help applicants stand out.
- Employers say that the most important skill they look for is solid knowledge of office software applications. In addition, employers value strong communication, organization and time management skills, accurate typing skills, and the ability to work independently.
- The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) and Microsoft Office Specialist credentials help candidates quantify their computer skills. Many local training programs also award certificates, diplomas, or degrees in the field. Experienced *administrative assistants* and *secretaries* can seek the Certified Professional Secretary or Certified Legal Secretary credentials.
- Some positions, such as *legal secretaries* and *medical secretaries*, require specialized skill sets. Employers also sometimes seek skills such as budgeting or web design.

Are any special programs or financial aid available?

- **CareerLink** is currently offering free credentialing for the International Computer Driving License (ICDL), as well as training to individuals who need help to pass the certification exam.
- Beyond the ICDL, **CareerLink** may also have a limited amount of training funds available to eligible individuals.
- If you are interested in attending a training program, contact the school's admissions office for advice on financial aid applications.

Where do I go for more information?

- International Association of Administrative Professionals: www.iaap-hq.org
- IAPP Pittsburgh Chapter: www.iaappittsburgh.com
- Legal Secretaries International Inc.: www.legalsecretaries.org
- Call **CareerLink** at 1-866-317-JOBS or check the website for job postings and training: www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us

Where can I get training locally?

- Bidwell Training Center** — Information Sciences. 412-323-4000. www.bidwell-training.org.
- The Bradford School** — Administrative Assistant; Legal Assistant. 412-391-6710. www.bradfordpittsburgh.edu.
- Career Training Academy** — Administrative Assistant; Executive Administrative Assistant; Receptionist. 412-367-4000 (Pittsburgh); 412-372-3900 (Monroeville); 724-337-1000 (New Kensington). www.careerta.com.
- Carlow College Office of Community Education** — Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access. 412-578-6682. www.carlow.edu/~communityeducation.
- Community College of Allegheny County** — Administrative Office Professional; Modern Office Systems Training. 412-237-2511 (Allegheny Campus); 724-325-6614 (Boyce); 412-273-6440 (Braddock Center); 412-469-4301 (South). www.ccac.edu.
- Connelley Technical Institute** — Business Office Technology. 412-338-3702. trfn.clpgh.org/connelley.
- Duff's Business Institute** — Administrative Secretary; Legal Secretary; Medical Secretary. 412-261-4520 Ext. 212. www.duffs-institute.com.
- Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh** — Medical Office Clerk; Word Processing Clerk; Microsoft Office Specialist. 412-390-2263. www.goodwillpitt.org.
- Harrison Career Institute** — Medical Office Specialist. 412-562-4999. hci.edu.
- ICM School of Business** — Office Administration; Legal and Medical Office Administration. 412-261-2647. www.icmschool.com.
- International Academy of Design & Technology** — Business Administration. 412-391-4197 ext. 267. www.iadt Pitt.com.
- Manpower** — Administrative Assistant. 412-434-6507; 412-373-0001; 724-933-3400. www.us.manpower.com.
- McKeesport Area Technology Center Project Partnership** — General Office Clerks. 412-664-3766. www.mckasd.com/all_about_the_technology_center.htm.
- New Horizons Computer Learning Center** — Microsoft Office Specialist. 412-920-5100. www.newhorizons.com.
- RETS Institute of Technology** — Computer Software Technology. 412-829-9000. www.retsaec.com.
- Triangle Tech** — Administrative Assistant (Medical and Accounting specializations). 1-800-874-8324. www.triangle-tech.com.
- Western School of Health and Business Careers** — Medical Office Administration. 412-281-2600. www.westernschool.com.

Remember...

Labor markets are affected by economic, social, and institutional factors that are difficult to predict. No one can forecast perfectly how many jobs will be available, or whether there will be too many or too few workers to fill those jobs. The reality is that employment is never a guarantee, even for individuals who pursue training in demand occupations.

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) is charged with promoting a coordinated and accountable employment and training system for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Responsibilities include setting and monitoring local performance standards, chartering CareerLink comprehensive and community centers that provide a range of services to jobseekers and employers, and certifying qualified training providers. Board members are appointed by the Mayor of Pittsburgh and the Chief Executive of Allegheny County.

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Phone: 412-552-7090 | Fax: 412-552-7091 | Internet: www.trwib.org

Chairperson: Gregory G. Greenleaf | Executive Director: Ronald D. Painter | Editor: Amy Erica Smith | Designer: Jenny Wolsk Bain

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. This series may be found on the Internet at www.trwib.org/pcp.htm.

The TRWIB does not warrant that the information in this publication is accurate or complete.

