

# Understanding the Local Labor Market

## Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

### Focus: Nursing Aides

November 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.

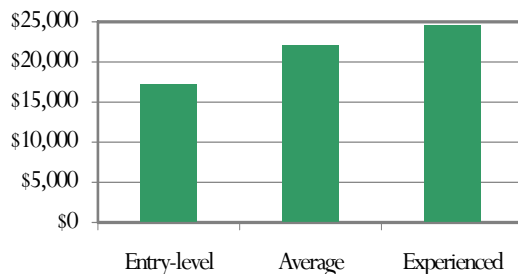
#### What do nursing aides do?

- Nursing aides (also called nursing assistants, patient care assistants, geriatric aides, unlicensed assistive personnel, or hospital attendants) work under the supervision of nursing and medical staff in health care facilities.
- They perform routine duties including: answering patient call lights; delivering messages; serving meals; making beds; and helping patients eat, dress, and bathe. Nursing aides may also take patient temperatures, pulse rates and respiration rates, and assist in some procedures. They observe patients' physical, mental and emotional conditions and report changes to nursing or medical staff.

#### What are nursing aides' wages, benefits, and work conditions?

- Nursing aides work in hospitals, long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, doctor's offices, home health agencies, private homes and state institutions.
- Nursing aides earn an average annual salary of \$22,156 in Allegheny County. While nursing aides' salaries are commensurate with the educational requirements of the job, the work can entail a tremendous amount of responsibility and can be both physically and emotionally demanding.
- Many nursing aide positions are part-time and do not provide benefits. However, full-time nursing aides generally receive benefits. Night and weekend shifts may be required.

**Wages for Nursing Aides in Allegheny County**



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

Note: Includes average wages for nursing aides, orderlies and attendants.

#### What do nursing aides like about their jobs?

- Nursing aides gain satisfaction through helping the sick and elderly in a hands-on capacity. By directly responding to the daily needs of patients and residents, nursing aides play a critical role in the health care system.
- Nursing aides are relied upon to develop trusting relationships with the individuals to whom they provide care. Nursing aides working in long-term care facilities may have a unique opportunity to develop longer, meaningful relationships with the residents of these facilities.

#### What are related jobs and advancement opportunities?

- Working as a nursing aide provides a good opportunity to gain exposure to the health care industry and to decide whether or not to pursue a career in health care.
- Through additional training, nursing aides may advance to higher positions such as licensed practical nurses (LPNs) or registered nurses (RNs). Some local healthcare employers offer programs to support this kind of career move.
- Nursing aides may also consider advancing into other health care positions such as: physical therapist assistant; occupational therapist assistant; or, health careers with advanced technology requirements.
- Through working night and weekend shifts, nursing aides may have the ability to pursue additional training during the day.

#### How many nursing aide openings are there?

- In our region, current demand for nursing aides is strong and steady. The PA Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information & Analysis estimates that there are approximately 12,400 nursing aides, orderlies and attendants (including approximately 4,000 home health aides and approximately 800 psychiatric aides) employed in Allegheny County.
- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** had more than 1,250 job postings for nursing aides in 2003. Currently, there are nearly 100 local nursing aide job postings on the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink website.
- The demand for all health care professionals, including nursing aides, in our region is expected to increase due to a growing share of the population that is elderly and will need medical and long-term care in the future.

## FOCUS: **Nursing Aides**

### How can I become a nursing aide?

- Most nursing aide positions require a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Some employers, particularly in the long-term care industry, require that nursing aides be certified as a certified nursing assistant or CNA. Hospitals generally do not require this certification and provide training on-the-job.
- Local high schools, vocational technical schools, career technology centers, and community colleges offer training programs in preparation for certification. To be certified in Pennsylvania, you must first complete at least 75 hours of training (which generally includes classroom, clinical and lab) at a nursing aide training program that has been approved by the state (see sample list of approved programs, right).
- To become certified, after completing training you must pass a state-administered exam. There is a \$93 fee to take the exam.

### How do I find out about nursing aide jobs?

- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has many job postings for nursing aides. Call 1-866-317-JOBS or visit [www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com](http://www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com) to find out more.
- **Local healthcare employer websites** often post their nursing aide employment opportunities.
- Many health care employers also use **local newspapers** to advertise openings.

### Can I get help paying for training?

- Many **local employers** subsidize training for their nursing aide employees.
- A limited amount of training funds may be available to eligible individuals through **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink**.

### Where can I get training locally?

*To be eligible to take the state-administered CNA exam, you must first complete training through a nursing aide program that has been approved by the state. A sample list of state-approved programs in Allegheny County that are open to the public appears below. For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us) and search for "nurse aide training program list."*

- A.W. Beattie AVTS** (Pittsburgh) — 412-366-2800  
**Community College of Allegheny County** (Pittsburgh) — 412-271-0201  
**Eldercare Nursing Center** (Munhall) — 412-462-8002  
**Forbes Road CTC\*** (Monroeville) — 412-373-8100  
**Friendship Village of South Hills** (Pittsburgh) — 724-941-3100x116  
**Harmar Village Care Center** (Cheswick) — 724-274-3773  
**Marian Manor** (Pittsburgh) — 412-563-7412  
**Mariner Health Care of West Hills** (Coraopolis) — 412-269-1101  
**Parkway West AVTS\*** (Oakdale) — 412-923-1772  
**Pittsburgh Job Corps Center** (Pittsburgh) — 412-441-8700  
**Seneca Place** (Verona) — 412-798-8000  
**Southwestern Nursing Center** (Pittsburgh) — 412-466-0600  
**Steel Center AVTS\*** (Clairton) — 412-469-3200  
**Sycamore Creek Nursing** (Coraopolis) — 412-331-6060  
**Tandem Healthcare** (Cheswick) — 412-767-4998  
**UPMC McKeesport School of Nursing** (McKeesport) — 412-664-2108  
**UPMC Senior Living** (Multiple Locations) — 412-784-5027  
**Vincentian Home** (Pittsburgh) — 412-366-5600  
**Vincentian Regency Nursing Home** (Pittsburgh) — 412-366-8540  
**Woodhaven Care Center** (Monroeville) — 412-856-4770

\* Programs available to youth only.

### 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 Mayor Tom Murphy (City of Pittsburgh) and Chief Executive Dan Onorato (Allegheny County).

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