

Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

Focus: Machinists

September 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.

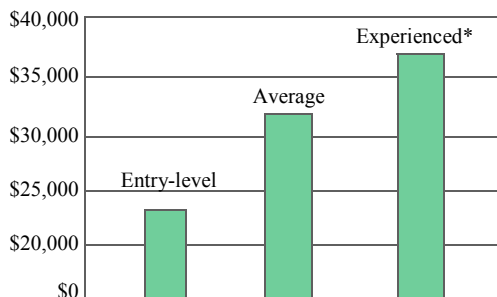
What do machinists do?

- Machinists use a variety of machine tools to produce metallic and non-metallic parts and instruments. They study blue prints to determine the dimensions and tolerances of finished products and they assemble machined parts into complete units. They may work with mills, lathes, borers, grinders, or advanced machining tools controlled by computers.

What are machinists' wages, benefits, and work conditions?

- Locally, machinists earn \$32,530/year on average and generally receive good benefits including healthcare, vacation, and retirement plans. Some local companies offer shift work. Machinists are typically hourly employees and often earn over-time pay.

Wages for Machinists in the Region



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

* Note: Local surveys indicate that experienced machinists can earn quite a bit more than the average wages for experienced machinists shown above.

- Machinists generally work in small to mid-sized metal manufacturing companies. There are more than 1,600 small to mid-sized metal manufacturing companies in southwestern Pennsylvania. Many of these companies are located in smaller communities such as Clairton, Bridgeville, Carnegie, Trafford and East Pittsburgh.
- Machinists may work in a traditional manufacturing environment with manual machines and/or with computer numerical controlled machines. They may also work in more pristine environments such as those needed to manufacture high precision parts used in high tech industries.

What do machinists like about their jobs?

- Machinists find their jobs rewarding because they:
 - Work as active members of teams;
 - Use creativity to solve problems;
 - Have personal responsibility in carrying out their jobs;
 - Create something real.



"What do I like most about my job? The creativity, the ability to run my own job, and being part of a team. I love my job!"

— Local Machinist

Tell me about related jobs and advancement opportunities.

- As in other professions, machinists must take a lifelong learning approach to their careers by continually upgrading their skills and keeping abreast of changing technology.
- If you're interested in machining, you might consider one of these specific positions: tool and die maker; mill set-up operator; multiple spindle operator; fabrication assembly and repair technician. The Advanced Manufacturing Career Collaborative provides detailed job descriptions and career pathway information at www.amcsquared.com.

How many machinist openings are there?

- The PA Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information & Analysis estimates that there are 2,390 machinists employed in Allegheny County. **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** had more than 200 job postings for machinists in 2003.
- Demand for machinists is expected to increase as the current aging machinist workforce retires. Over 15% of machinists in Allegheny County are over 55 years old and 10% are expected to retire every year for the next decade.

How do I find out about machining jobs?

- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has many job postings for machinists. Visit www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com or call 1-866-317-JOBS to find out more.
- **Catalyst Connections Career Center** also posts machinist positions at www.catalystconnection.org/services.htm.

Where can I get training locally?

In Allegheny County:

Forbes Road Career Technology Center (CTC) — Machining Offerings: Introduction to Machining, Journey Level Machinist, Machining Apprenticeship Program similar to NTMA with additional offerings. Contact: 412-373-8100 x223

Langley High School Annex — Machining Offerings: Machine Operations (for high school students only). Contact: 412-488-5185

Manufacturing Assistance Center (University of Pittsburgh) — Machining Offerings: Basic Machinist Training, CAD-CAM, CNC, EDM. Contact: 412-826-3531 or www.mac.pitt.edu

New Century Careers Manufacturing 2000 — Machining Offerings: Basic Machining Training (free to eligible applicants). Contact: 1-800-822-9337

New Century Careers Manufacturing 2000 Plus — Machining Offerings: Advanced Machining, CNC Machining, and Quality Assurance for incumbent employees seeking skill upgrades. Contact: 1-866-625-4723

Parkway West AVTS — Machining Offerings: A three year machine tool technical training. Contact: 412-923-1772

Steel Center AVTS — Machining Offerings: For adults offers New Century Careers' Manufacturing 2000 Program (see contact information above). Also offers a machining program (for high school students only). Contact: 412-469-3200 x129

Taylor Allderdice High School — Machining Offerings: Machine Operations (for high school students only). Contact: 412-422-4800

Tooling University — Machining Offerings: Offer online courses for training as a machinist. Contact: <http://www.toolingu.com/nc2>

In Neighboring Counties:

Butler County Community College (www.ccbc.edu); **Westmoreland County Community College** (www.wcc-pa.edu); **Beaver County AVTS** (724-728-5800); **Butler County AVTS** (724-282-0735); **Fayette County AVTS** (724-437-2721); **Greene County AVTS** (724-627-3106); **Central Westmoreland CTC** (724-925-3532 x1300); **Mon Valley CTC** (724-489-9581); **Northern Westmoreland CTC** (724-335-9389); **Western Area CTC** (724-746-2890)

How can I become a machinist?

- To work as a machinist you need specific technical training in machining. You can get this training during high school by attending your local Career Technology Center (CTC)/vocational technical school. To obtain training after high school, you can take adult education classes at some local CTCs or from other industry training providers.
- Basic training as a machinist generally takes one year or less. While a college degree is not needed, an associate degree is recommended if you are interested in advancing to supervisory positions.
- Community colleges and other 2- and 4-year educational institutions may grant credit toward an associate or bachelor degree for machining training.
- Local unions, employers and professional societies may offer machining apprenticeships to advance to a journey level (a higher level machining credential). The National Tooling and Machining Association offers an apprenticeship, administered by New Century Careers (866-326-6862), that is open to the public.
- You can earn the NIMS (National Institute of Metalworking Skills) credential to demonstrate your metal working skills (www.nims-skills.org).

Can I get help paying for training?

- The **New Century Careers Manufacturing 2000** program is free to eligible applicants.
- **Employers** often pay for apprenticeship training. Employers may also offer tuition reimbursement for specialized skills training or coursework toward an associate or bachelor degree.
- College students may be eligible for financial aid through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA).
- A limited amount of training funds may be available to eligible individuals through **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink**.

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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