

## Schools Will Respond to Employment Demands

Intensifying shortages of skilled workers will stimulate employers to demand increased vocational training. The impact will be seen first in the occupations with the greatest need. An example that will come as no surprise is the shortage of nurses practicing in healthcare environments. The need is acute, inspiring traditional students and older workers shifting careers. A major problem is a shortage of seats in nursing schools.

As administrators and hospitals work to quickly train students to ease the shortage, enrollment in many nursing schools is up. The field of nursing is growing in popularity among older workers in mid-career who are looking for job security and an opportunity to make a difference. Enrollment in entry-level nursing programs was up 8% in 2002, and hospital and school administrators are developing accelerated nurse-training programs to help students complete coursework in half the time customarily required.

Currently, there are 105 "fast-track" programs in the U.S. and another 53 being developed. Prospective nurses are plentiful and hospitals are eager to hire graduates. Hospital recruiters are hard at work, offering scholarships to students who agree to work for them after graduation. Schools teaching healthcare topics, like the University of Maryland, report that enrollment in their nursing programs is up; applications to the school's accelerated program for this fall are

nearly quadruple the number from a year ago, and enrollment for bachelor's degrees in nursing increased 16% last year.

This phenomenon will be replicated in schools throughout the United States and in other countries as well, for other skilled occupations currently experiencing shortages. Other healthcare fields, like pharmacy and radiology, will see increasing enrollment in colleges, universities, and other educational institutions. More high schools will partner with hospitals, following the example of programs in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Non-healthcare occupations, such as automobile collision technicians and kitchen designers, will experience similar growth, increasing enrollment in academic and vocational education and training programs. Community colleges will be assigned a stronger role, in spite of the current trend of their budgets being cut by cost-conscious state governments.

Education and training are essential for a competent workforce.

From "Herman Trend Alert," by Roger Herman and Joyce Gioia, Strategic Business Futurists. (800) 227-3566 or [www.hermangroup.com](http://www.hermangroup.com).

## College Recruitment Career "Hot Spot"



Here's a great opportunity for college students to see the multitude of career opportunities that await them in the Hartford-Springfield Area, New England's Knowledge Corridor. More than 80 area employers are expected. Visit [ctjobfairs.com](http://ctjobfairs.com) for more information on this exciting event. Date: January 27th at the CT Expo Center in Hartford.

## Occupational Profile: Social and Human Service Assistants

Social and Human Service Assistant is a generic term encompassing various titles such as Case Management Aide, Community Support Worker, Mental Health Aide, Community Outreach Worker, Life Skill Counselor, and Gerontology Aide. They work under the direction of professionals from a variety of fields, such as nursing, psychiatry, psychology, rehabilitative or physical therapy, or social work. For applicants with the appropriate postsecondary education, job opportunities should be excellent as it is projected to be among the fastest growing occupations.

**What They Do.** Social and human service assistants perform a range of personal care services to clients who may be at home, in a half-way house, group shelter, psychiatric hospital, in a rehabilitation program, at an outpatient clinic or in a community-based program. They assess clients' needs, help clients obtain any benefits they are eligible for (such as Food Stamps, Medicaid or welfare), provide transportation to medical appointments and the like, assist in personal financial matters, and provide emotional support to the client and the client's family. In halfway houses, group homes, and government-supported housing programs, they may assist adults who need supervision with personal hygiene and daily living skills. They confer with other medical personnel to gain better insight into the client's background and needs. Community-based assistants may organize and lead group activities, assist clients in need of counseling or crisis intervention, or administer a food bank or emergency fuel program. In psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation programs, and outpatient clinics, they may have the specialized task of teaching clients how to get along better with others and how to communicate more effectively.

**Education and Training.** While a bachelor's degree usually is not required for entry into this occupation, employers increasingly seek individuals with relevant work experience or education beyond high school. Certificates or associate degrees in subjects such as social work, human services, gerontology, or one of the social or behavioral sciences meet most employers' requirements. Educational attainment often influences the kind of work employees may be assigned and the degree of responsibility that may be entrusted to them. Workers with a high school education are likely to receive extensive on-the-job training to work in direct-care services, while employees with a college degree might be assigned to do supportive counseling, coordinate program activities, or manage a group home. Hiring requirements in group homes tend to be more stringent in that an applicant needs a valid driving license and submits to a criminal background investigation. Employers try to select applicants who have effective communication skills, a strong sense of responsibility, and the ability to manage time effectively. Many human service jobs involve direct contact with people who are vulnerable to exploitation or mistreatment; therefore, patience, understanding, and a strong desire to help others are highly valued characteristics.

**Earnings.** In 2001 there were 283,060 social and human service assistants in the United States, earning \$24,660 on average. There are about 7,840 of these workers employed in Connecticut, earning an average of \$33,380 per year. Employment in the Eastern region of Connecticut is the lowest with about 790 workers. The Capital region, which includes Hartford, has the highest employment of these workers with about 3,560.

**Job Outlook.** Job opportunities for social and human service assistants are expected to be excellent, attributed in part to the aging population and as social welfare policies shift focus from benefit-based to work-based programs. Opportunities are expected to be best in job-training programs, residential care facilities, and private social service agencies, which include such services as adult daycare. In addition, social and human service assistants will continue to be needed to provide services to pregnant teenagers, the homeless, the mentally disabled and developmentally challenged, and those with substance-abuse problems. Connecticut is expected to have approximately 360 job openings annually through 2010 for these workers, with jobs being more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas.

(Originally printed in The Connecticut Economic Digest's March, 2003 publication, available on-line at [www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi). Connecticut data updated as of September 2003.)

## **Counseling in Times of Change, Challenge, and Opportunity**

Connecticut Counseling Association Annual Conference  
Friday - April 30, 2004  
Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Cromwell, CT

### **Mark Your Calendar....**

The Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA) Conference will be an exciting event with excellent presenters, high quality workshops, an expanded exhibitor showcase, and a chance to network with colleagues. Dr. Sam Gladding, nationally known author and leader in the counseling profession, will open the conference with a keynote address guaranteed to motivate and help all to reflect on changing roles in the new millennium. As President-elect of ACA, he brings valuable insights to emerging trends and a vision that sees counseling as a "comprehensive profession."

### **No Boundaries....**

CCA wants to make their conference the premier professional event for counselors in the Northeast. The Call for Program Proposals, posted on the CCA web site at [www.ccain.org](http://www.ccain.org), will draw a variety of potential presenters from throughout the region. They expect to provide a rich array of workshops focused on the themes of:

- Dealing with change and transition;
- Meeting challenges;
- Finding/creating opportunities;
- Stress management, resiliency, and wellness; and
- General counseling topics.

The workshops are a great chance to explore new areas, learn, and earn CEU's. Share your own expertise; presenters receive free registration to the conference!

### **Imagine More....**

Discussions are underway with the National Career Development Association for a joint Leadership Development Institute on Saturday - May 1, 2004 at the Radisson. CCA hopes to offer association leaders and emerging leaders from the region a robust symposium designed to enhance leadership skills and provide a forum for idea exchange and individual planning. Look for more information on the CCA web site in the near future.

Questions?

E-mail Linda Kobylarz, CCA President-elect and Conference Chairperson at: [lindakoby@aol.com](mailto:lindakoby@aol.com).

## **Preparing Young Women for Computer Science Careers**

Several well-paying computer occupations are among the fastest growing occupations in the economy through 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Yet women continue to be underrepresented in the computer science field. What can educators do to narrow that gender gap? Prepare them better, writes Cynthia Lanius in "GirlTECH: Getting Girls Interested in Computer Science."

Simply liking computers, which Lanius says girls often respond that they do, is not enough to prepare them for computer science careers. High school girls are less likely than boys to take high-level mathematics, science, and computer science courses—all necessary training for studying computer science in college. But ask any college student who has changed majors: interest in a subject doesn't go very far if you're struggling to make up for lost preparation.

To see Lanius's article online, visit [www.math.rice.edu/~lanius/club/girls3.html](http://www.math.rice.edu/~lanius/club/girls3.html). It is also available through the online digest of the Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center, which provides information and resources on gender equity in education. Contact the Center at 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02458; 1 (800) 225-3088; [www.edc.org/womensequity](http://www.edc.org/womensequity).

*Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Spring 2003, Vol. 47 Number 1.

## NOVEMBER IS CAREER DEVELOPMENT MONTH!

Celebrate with activities and events!  
November 17-23, 2003 is National Career Development Week  
Visit [www.ncda.org](http://www.ncda.org) for ideas

### Career Development Poetry and Poster Contest

The Connecticut Career Counseling and Development Association (CCCDA) is sponsoring Connecticut's participation in the 38th Annual National Career Development Poetry and Poster Contest. All entries should reflect the contest's main theme "It's Not Just My Job, It's My Career!" or the sub-theme "Celebrating My Favorite Career."

The contest is open to all students and adults. State prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place winners in each of the Poster and Poetry contest divisions:

Primary	Grades K-2
Intermediate	Grades 3-5
Middle	Grades 6-8
Senior	Grades 9-12
Adult Student	Students enrolled in postsecondary institutions
Open Adult	Any adult (not a student)

State contest entries must be postmarked by December 12, 2003. State winners are automatically entered in the national competition (we had a national winner in the poster contest). For more information and a contest brochure, visit [www.ccamain.org](http://www.ccamain.org) and click the CCCDA page or contact:

Dennis Rouelle  
860-202-4848 (phone)  
860-870-3919 (fax)  
[xraoul@aol.com](mailto:xraoul@aol.com)

The next edition (2003-2004) of the *Connecticut Career Paths* publication is on the way. We hope to have it ready for delivery by the end of November. Watch for it at your school, *CT Works* Center, library or other agency or organization.

"Go confidently in the direction of  
your dreams. Live the life you  
have imagined."

Henry David Thoreau

### Hold the Date!

#### Connecticut Learns & Works Conference

#### *Yankee Ingenuity*

Tuesday, May 11, 2004  
Water's Edge Resort and Spa  
Westbrook, CT

Watch future *CCRN Updates* for more  
information

### CCRN Update

October 2003

CCRN/Office of Research  
Connecticut Department of Labor  
200 Folly Brook Boulevard  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Carol Bridges, Editor  
Phone (860) 263-6258 Fax (860) 263-6263  
e-mail: [carolyn.bridges@po.state.ct.us](mailto:carolyn.bridges@po.state.ct.us)

Available on-line at:  
[www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/ccrn.htm](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/ccrn.htm)