



Gearered Toward The Future

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKS

Small Business Industry Brief

1. What are some of the advantages to working in a small company (under 100 employees)?
 - Shorter commuting times in rural communities means less expense and time
 - Normally more flexibly on work hours and vacation schedule, usually never scheduled on Sunday, Holidays, etc.
 - A much larger voice and control of the company's processes and work environment
 - Lower cost of living, less expense in commuting and time saving makes up for differences in annual income from the closest >100 employer (without the travel expense and normally actual less dollars per hour if you include travel time).
 - Small aggressive growth company may provide more upside mobility and opportunities. Employees are able to grow and improve their life and family.
 - Small companies foster the ability to build strong personal relationships with coworkers/employees. Being a young entrepreneur, and young in general, I can always go to them for advice.
 - Being with a small company in a small town can increase the ability to network with people outside of work
 - Opportunity to make a difference and move up into a leadership role.
 - Less Bureaucracy and able to change policy when needed.

2. What are your top 3 recruitment and hiring challenges and some of the other unique challenges small companies face when it comes to their workforce?

Several businesses reported challenges similar to larger companies:

- Skills gap/having the required skills and training, and motivation.
- The unique challenges for the small business is the economy of scale:
 - Example - only advertising for 2 positions verses 20 like large company at nearly the same cost
 - Difficulty in having and maintaining training for the new hires that may lack the skills required.
 - Costs of health insurance and benefits are a challenge for all USA companies, but especially small ones.
- Labor is often the number one challenge,
- "Brain Drain/Youth Drain" – competing with quality of life in larger metros
- Difficulty in attracting workforce from metro/suburban environments
- Certain industries face even tougher challenges than others, an example, communications –
 - Few workers with experience, recruitment challenges
 - Forced to pay above average market wages to retain and attract, and offer expensive benefits packages
 - Getting security clearances
- Securing financing

3. Have you coordinated with other similar small businesses to save money and resources by sharing costs for training and/or sharing equipment or other resources? If so, please give an example?

From one respondent – "No, not at this time. We use barter for some software (music scheduling, production suite). We're fortunate to have an engineer. When he retires we will use a contract engineer who may be contracted with other local stations. We try to work with the high school industrial arts program."

4. Have you found barriers to sharing resources or training expenses with other similar small business?

Most respondents don't have the time or resources to figure out how to team up to share resources.

5. What are some of the occupations for which you often recruit and what is the minimum skill set needed for those occupations?

- CAD "Computer Aided Draft" (Solid Works Software) - minimum skill level of having been trained but maybe not experienced.
- CNC Operator "Computer Numerical Control" machine tools - preferred trained, but require math/computer skills.
- Welding (MIG & TIG) - must be formally trained and pre-job tested.
- Cabling technician- "I like to train people completely, so the best candidate for the job is someone that was worked a maintenance job."
- IT - Problem solving / troubleshooting skillset
- Sales – self-starter with confidence.
- On-air – ability to speak clearly and communicate directly with one person (who you never see), technical aptitude for operating broadcast equipment and audio editing. Collections Specialist.

Sample of Occupations That Can Become Available at Area Small Businesses

(This is just a sampling of occupations, these may or may not be open at this time.)

County/City	Company Name	Occupations	Average Wage
Bureau/Princeton	Gateway Services	Director Support Professional, BPART Driver	Wage Unavailable
Bureau/Buda	Van Packer	Technical Service/Drafting, Technical Service/Manufacturing Programmer, Marketing Coordinator, Regional Sales	Varies by Occupation
Bureau/Walnut	TCI Manufacturing	Welder	Wage Unavailable
Carroll/Thomson	Schafer Fisheries, Inc.	Production	\$13 - \$17/Hour
Carroll/Savanna	DSB Transport	Mini Van Driver	\$300 - \$500/Week
Carroll/Lanark	O'Mara Moving and Storage	Local Dispatcher	\$37,000 - \$40,000/Year
Jo Daviess/East Dubuque	Top Block and Brick	Yard Worker/Forklift Operator	\$12 - \$16/Hour
Jo Daviess/Galena	Jo Daviess County Housing Authority	Part Time Office Assistant	\$11,440/Year
Jo Daviess/Galena	Car-Mer Dairy	Full Time Farm Hand	\$12 - \$14/ Hour
La Salle/Marseilles	Liberty Laser Solutions	Assembler	\$10/Hour
La Salle/Mendota	Kunz Engineering	Assembler/Fabricator	\$14/Hour
La Salle/Streator	US Truck Body	Assembly, Welder (MIG), Welder (TIG)	\$12 - \$14/Hours
Lee/Dixon	Moxie Solar	Electrician	\$25 - \$30/Hour
Lee/Ashton	Fly-N-Cycle	Oder Processor	\$10 - \$15/Hour
Ogle/Rochelle	Pemberton Plumbing	Apprentice Plumber	\$12 - \$15/Hour
Ogle/Oregon	Covia Co	General Laborer	\$10 - \$12/Hour
Ogle/Rochelle	Morton Buildings	Construction Crew Member	\$17.50 - \$21/Hour
Putnam/Granville	Granville National Bank	Universal Banker	Wage Unavailable
Putnam/Hennepin	Marquis Energy LLC	Electrician	Wage Unavailable
Putnam/McNabb	Grasser's Plumbing and Heating	Appliance Delivery	Wage Unavailable
Whiteside/Sterling	C and C Construction	Laborers	\$10 - \$15/Hour
Whiteside/Morrison	Rockwood State Park	Historic Preservation Worker	\$9/Hour
Whiteside/Sterling	Koster Ag	Feed Mill Operator	\$38,000 - \$45,000/Year

Northwest Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) is a locally appointed workforce board that oversees workforce development programs that are funded by millions of federal tax dollars for an eight-county area (Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties).

www.nciworks.org

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